

# HARVARD THEOLOGICAL REVIEW

VOLUME XXIV

JULY, 1931

NUMBER 3

## GEORGE FOOT MOORE

*Born, at West Chester, Pennsylvania, October 15, 1851*

*Died, at Cambridge, Massachusetts, May 16, 1931*

THE death of Professor Moore has removed from the list of Editors of the *Harvard Theological Review* its most distinguished name. At the first establishment of the *Review*, Professor Moore took the lead in the consultations which led to the definition of its aim and the drawing up of a plan for the conduct of it. On him, as head of the editorial board, fell the labor of making the necessary preliminary arrangements of organization and business. To every detail of printing and typographical style and editorial correspondence he gave due and careful attention. For a year and a half after the first number was issued he bore the burden of the managing editorship. His remarkable knowledge of all the fields included in the scope of the *Review* and singular fertility in the suggestion of themes and writers for articles, together with his wide acquaintance and manifold connections in the world, powerfully affected the dignity and usefulness of the new publication. His broad purpose and the high aims and standards which he set for it have never ceased to be an active force in the effort "to maintain a spirit at once catholic and scientific, in sympathy with the aims and activities of the Church as well as with scholarly investigation." Throughout the whole period his own contributions were many, both of incisive book-reviews and of important articles. To the end his thought and interest for the *Review* were quick, and until

the beginning of his last illness various plans for articles occupied his mind.

Professor Moore's fellow editors can here only record their affection and gratitude. It is their hope later to be able to print in the *Review* an adequate account of his scholarly work, with a complete list of his published writings.

# THE NATURE OF THE CHURCH

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## I

### *The Birth of Churches*

THE perennial debate as to the nature of the church must always seem to those who are more interested in ideas than in institutions one of the irrelevancies with which theology is so often charged. It is not the church that matters, but religion.

The appeal, however, from the religious institution to the religious idea is merely a restatement of the issue in abstract terms. Every church is an attempt to give form and permanence to some particular interpretation of the gospel and as such cannot be dissociated from the idea which occasioned it. There is much to be said for studying the religious idea in its concrete institutional forms. Churches furnish to those concerned with the subject a laboratory in which they may observe the operations of religion, if not in its brief prophetic moments, then over the longer reaches of its habitual life. William James to the contrary, there is quite as much to be learned about religion from its 'chronic' states as from its 'acute' attacks, since the validity of the acuter forms of religion is finally proved in survival values which only time can discover.

Whatever theories may be held as to the divine origin and nature of the church, the causes which bring it to birth in history are patent and need no supernaturalism to explain them. Prophetic experiences may impinge upon the mystery and no rational account of them is ever quite convincing, but, given the fact of an inspired man with a following, the institution is not far off. It is true that if the prophet is to be revered as the founder of a church, he must come into a society saturated with an inarticulate religion which he makes articulate. He will be frustrated if the time is not ready for his words and deeds. But



if he happily matches the latent possibilities of his day, a church follows as a crystallization around his experience and that of his immediate followers.

This experience is accepted by those who attempt its translation into the terms of institutional life as a transcript of religion in its entirety. Founders of churches habitually assume that their articles of belief, orders, and liturgies embody all that is necessary to salvation, and that their doctrines and practices are valid always, everywhere, for all men. No person who is organizing a church omits wittingly from his system anything which he holds essential to religion.

Even the reformer, a familiar figure in the field, who breaks away from the established church to launch an independent society, makes no claim to inaugurate a new religion. He says either that he is protesting against grave abuses which have crept into the elder church or that he is at last making explicit the religion which hitherto has been merely implicit in that church. In the one instance he conceives of himself as abandoning the established church to its irreligion, in the other instance he is delivering it of its true religion. Whichever interpretation he places upon his own venture, he thinks of himself as now presenting in its unimpaired integrity the religion which was from the beginning.

This fixed habit of the ecclesiastical mind, which conceives of the faith and practice of a church as being the affirmation of original religion — original in the sense of being elemental rather than novel — is very old. It has its sources in the doctrine of the heavenly pattern and the earthly copy, which passed over into Christianity as part of its Jewish heritage. For the Jew the law, the temple, and all the fabric of organized religion had been hidden with God from the beginning. They were not new creations; rather, what had hitherto been concealed was now made manifest.

The theologians of the second century laid bold claim to this idea and turned it to Christian account. They conceded to the institutions of Judaism merely a temporary validity and affirmed that the Christian gospel and the Christian church were final copies of the heavenly original, and that the Christian

society was the people whom God had from the first intended. This adroit apologetic accustomed Christians to seek and to find in the gospel and the church, rather than in the law and the temple, the transcripts of that reality which the dogma held to have been always with God in heaven.

The Christian church had no little difficulty in accommodating the categories of Greek thought, of which it made eventual use, to the forms of Jewish thinking. At this point, however, the Academy and the Synagogue were at one. The Platonic philosophy had long affirmed its faith in a world of eternal ideas which become manifest on this earth by assuming the vestment of matter. Heavenly realities were incarnated rather than revealed. The Greek conception, however, agreed with the Jewish in holding that whatever exists on this earth in the name of religion has had a prior existence in heaven's endless time or a timeless existence as an eternal spiritual reality.

Given such an interpretation of the manifestations of religion in history, there could be no ecclesiastical innovations. A novel religion would be a contradiction in terms. Indeed, until most recent times any claim to such innovation would have been a liability. Churches have traditionally held that they witnessed to that which was from the beginning. This fixed custom of so construing the church is the common premise of all the major Christian communions. It accounts for the paradox of the reformer who professes to be more orthodox than the conventional communion which he leaves, since ecclesiastical reform in the past has always preferred to think of itself as a recovery and retreat rather than an advance. The idea of innovation is a very late one, and when it appears it marks a departure, probably unconscious rather than conscious, from the premises upon which churches have hitherto been built.

It follows, therefore, that no considerable historic church, prior to the last century, was ever launched in the purely experimental temper. Even those who have banded themselves together as 'seekers' have invoked the mystical doctrine that because they sought they had already found. There was no genuine empiricism in such a process, since the result was guaranteed in advance. So also the modern theories of the 'broken



lights' of some ideal church yet to be realized is a late account of the facts. The normal Christian church over most of the centuries has traditionally professed to embody the whole of religion and to reveal or incarnate those eternal truths which have an immemorial and spiritual being with God.

If we seek, as we must seek, some rational account of this Jewish and Greek dogmatism, we shall find occasion for it in the stuff of the religious consciousness. All theories of the heavenly original to one side, it is the nature of every strong religious conviction to seek to universalize itself. For what is a man's religion? It is the sum of those ideas about God, himself, his fellow men, and the course of the world's affairs which he believes to be beyond question of a doubt. They are to him so little a matter of opinion and so much a matter of certainty that he holds them to be sure of final vindication and general acceptance. The secular world may give dusty answers to the soul hot for certainties in this our life, but religion does not traffic in these uncertainties. It speaks clearly and finally.

The religious man, therefore, thinks that in due time the whole world will see these matters as he sees them and will subscribe to his creed. As he construes the riddle of history, only ignorance and wilful prejudice, or the inscrutable providence of God, have delayed this conversion so long. He frets at what may seem to him the tedious interim, but he is certain of the end. Heaven, whatever else it may prospectively be to the religious man, is a time or state of life in which he is proved to be right in these essential matters. To be found wrong would be hell.

It follows then that the great historic churches, which are in theory earthly copies of heavenly originals, were in fact consistent attempts to universalize particular religious convictions. The strain of imperialism, intolerance, monopolism which we discover in all churches is the measure of the intensity of the convictions which first occasioned them. The idea of religious tolerance is a late one, and betrays the advent of skepticism in a society which attempts to make a moral virtue out of an intellectual necessity. So long as a church is sure of the sufficiency of its faith and the correctness of its practice it cannot

tolerate error or concede to rival churches the validity which its unimpaired self-confidence assures to it.

We come thus to the conclusion of this initial aspect of the matter; every great church has claimed either openly or tacitly to be the Holy Catholic Church. This claim has not been confined to the Roman and Eastern churches alone, it is implied in the constitution of all the major Protestant sects as well. When the founders of Andover Seminary proposed as the basis of that Seminary a creed which was "to continue as the sun and moon forever," they were running true to traditional Protestant form. Chief Justice Rugg's opinion, handed down in the recent Andover case, is an accurate account of the normal Protestant procedure for the first three centuries of its history:

There was no elasticity in their statement of what they intended in certain respects. They made no provision for material changes in the religious conceptions set forth in the creed. . . With respect to those doctrinal and creedal requirements the founders did not contemplate changes in . . . the historical succession. Their views . . . as to doctrine and creed were immutable. [They] enjoined that every article of the creed "forever remain entirely and identically the same, without the least alteration."

These are the principles of a Holy Catholic Church, as plain and unequivocal at Andover as in Rome or Constantinople or Moscow.

History, however, is in this respect nothing but a long record of increasing perplexity. When the fervent faith of the first enthusiasts who found a church is given fixed form in an institution, that faith suffers in the process. There is an inevitable loss of the initial ardor. As enthusiasm wanes, the need for discipline increases; and the institution which first occupied itself with communicating its enthusiasm becomes a society for compelling obedience. The fellowship of professedly saved souls is metamorphosed into an organization for saving souls. The sacraments which were first construed as signs and sanctions of a grace already received become the means to a grace anticipated but not yet experienced. The whole society is altered in character, and reappears at some time subsequent to its birth as a means for realizing a life which had been assumed as already given at the outset.



What is equally serious, there is in the institution a loss of pliability. An organized society is never as flexible as the free individual. Institutions, if they intend to endure, must forswear themselves to a degree not required of free men. This structural rigidity required by the very nature of an institution creates for the organization a whole type of problem with which the founder and his first disciples did not have to deal — the problem of interpretation.

We commonly take for granted the course of Christian history during the latter half of the first century. But the more closely we read the New Testament — particularly the Pauline epistles, which cover the period when the church was in its first making — the stronger the impression we get of a very fluid society. The historic church in the forms in which we have come to know it actually resulted. But so far as we can discover from the sources, there was no necessity inherent in the gospel itself which required just these forms and precluded all others. On the contrary there is the constant suggestion that other issues might equally well have eventuated, a form of church life structurally quite different, yet quite as indubitably Christian.

The crystallizing process of the middle and latter half of the first century gave us in fact the rudiments of the Catholic church. But the process seems to have been determined quite as much by the accidents of geography and the requirements of local expediency as by any interior logic peculiar to the gospel itself. We have been told recently that not merely episcopal, but presbyterian and congregational churches as well, may appeal with equal warrant to apostolic practice as a sanction for their polities. This fact itself suggests that the fluid possibilities of the primitive church were not exhausted in the dominant type of Christian society which ensued. There may well have been other leads and possibilities of which we know little and which historically have come to nothing.

Once, however, a church fixes upon its faith and way of life these alternatives are denied it. It must operate thereafter within the limits of its own self-appointed rules. It instantly excludes the intimations of other ways of thought and life which



existed in its amorphous origins. But what is more serious, it has pledged away its own future, it has given to time hostages which it cannot afford and which will prove thereafter an increasing embarrassment. Situations arise for which the primitive faith and practice have made no provision. The human mind operating in unfettered ways outside all churches discovers new truths which are irreconcilable with the forms, if not the substance, of the faith once delivered to the church and which are with the greatest difficulty finally domesticated within that faith. Moral problems make their appearance, for which, in the specific and pressing forms that weigh hard upon men, there is no provision in the traditional rule of life.

In his essay on Monasticism Harnack has analyzed the option which every religious society must ultimately face. Either it remains doggedly true to its primitive deposit of truth and accepts thus its self-imposed penalty of increasing sterility, or else it sets up an apparatus for interpretation which amounts in fact to a perpetual secularization of its first faith and practice. "Monasticism in the East maintained its independence at the cost of stagnation; monasticism in the West remained effectual at the cost of losing its essential principle."

## II

### *The Catholic Churches*

It is probably fair to say that no Christian church has been as faithful to the initial requirements of the Catholic theory of the church as has the Eastern church. Normal and progressive doctrinal development ceased in the East with the seventh oecumenical council of 787. There has been some slight elaboration of ritual during the intervening centuries, some play of the aesthetic sense in the mosaics, paintings, and music of that church, but there have been few religious ideas in the East for nearly twelve hundred years. The mere survival of the Eastern church under such conditions is significant witness to the inherent vitality of religion and religious institutions, as of the power of the original Christian idea.

Nevertheless the waning power of this church in many lands

and its apocalyptic disappearance from at least one great land must be put down in part to the want in Eastern orthodoxy of any means of accommodating the truth of the first centuries to the increment of truth in these later centuries. The Eastern church still vindicates the proposition that a church can survive for a very long time upon its primitive and unmodified deposit of faith. But it survives, as Harnack suggests, in a state of stagnation, and the increasing discrepancy between its hereditary dogmas and the growing body of reliable knowledge steadily impairs its vitality. Probably the Russian church would not have gone down so easily before the onslaught of atheistic communism had its doctrines represented more present realities in the minds of its constituency.

With the Latin church it has been otherwise. It had apparently inherited from the empire a certain genius for colonization which taught it how to tolerate, and then to assimilate, ideas that were not indigenous with itself. A comparison of the histories of the Eastern and Western churches suggests at once the central importance for a church of some adequate apparatus for interpretation.

An idea powerful enough to give rise to a church in the first instance is precisely the type of idea that requires perpetual re-interpretation. An idea which does not need interpretation lacks the magnitude and vigor necessary as the premise for a church. The difficulties, however, introduced by the necessity for interpretation are considerable. The temper of the founders of churches is prophetic and creative. The temper of the interpreter is by contrast critical. There is a subtle change in the mental character of the two processes, one of which creates a church, the other of which perpetuates it. The scribe is not the same man as the law-giver. The apologist is another person than the prophet. Furthermore every interpretation of a primitive faith is in some measure a tacit admission of its inadequacy. No dogmatic statement that the faith remains unmodified can blind our eyes to the changes which it suffers in elaboration and in the application of it to new circumstance. The interpreter becomes the true seat of authority in the church, no matter how stoutly he disclaims this high responsibility.



Yet, again, each local and temporal reference of the faith impairs to some degree its supposed initial universality and sufficiency. The more closely Catholic dogma is articulated to time and place the less that dogma retains of its timeless and heavenly quality. This process of accommodation has been classically described as "the acute secularization of the gospel." Yet it is difficult to see how any religion can hope to survive without such secularization. The word has an unpleasant connotation, but in fact it indicates that the doors of the institution are open rather than closed to new truth. The institutional alternative to such secularization is not unimpaired piety, but death.

One cannot turn, even casually, to the Church of Rome without realizing that its vigorous survival in history is due primarily to the formal adequacy of its apparatus for interpreting the faith. If we do not emulate Rome in detail, we do well to ponder it in principle. It does not become those who stand outside that great communion to speak ungenerously of it. Indeed there is in many Protestant circles a willingness to learn from it, even though there may be little inclination to return to it. The Roman Church has, as all other churches have, its unlovely ecclesiastical aspects. But the more one knows of churches the clearer it is that ecclesiasticism is the same in every denomination. The purely institutional and sectarian type of mind runs true to form in all communions. In America the Roman Church is frequently charged with intermeddling in affairs of state, in defiance of the principle of the separation of church and state. It is, however, doubtful whether the record of organized Protestantism is in this respect essentially better. Catholic intermeddling in politics is neither religiously nor politically more reprehensible than the frank lobbying of many Protestant bodies and the tacit assumption that the Protestant vote can be delivered to particular candidates for public office or commandeered for special legislative reforms. American Protestantism has altogether too much glass in its own house to reach for the nearest stone.

Meanwhile those who are theologically farthest removed from Rome often see clearly its indubitable elements of strength. Rome has had in recent years few critics more candid than

Harnack and Sabatier. Both were irrevocably Protestant and individualist in their conception of Christianity, yet each paid generously to Rome her due. Harnack says of Rome that "in all ages it has produced saints, so far as men can be so called, and still produces them today." Sabatier concedes that Roman Catholicism is "a deep, and beautiful religion, a sap of Christian life, a source of mystic *élan*, and of heroic devotedness, which those souls cannot forget who have been refreshed and renewed by them."

Nevertheless the Protestant who stands outside the Roman Church ponders with some perplexity the perpetual process of accommodation by which the primitive dogma is reconciled to new knowledge. To the onlooker Rome never appears wholly ingenuous in her claim that so much of new truth as is domesticated within the faith has been latent in that faith from the first, and is evoked when its full time is come. Yet it is quite clear that the institutional strength of Rome lies in the ecclesiastical provision made in advance for these emergencies. Councils have continued to add to the body of Christian truth century after century. The Roman pontiff is theoretically in a position to make pronouncements upon the faith as authoritative as those first delivered by the apostles. The puzzled layman or the bewildered priest need not remain in uncertainty as to what his Christian faith and practice require of him. There is in Rome full official provision for answering his questions, whether theoretical or practical. No Catholic need be in doubt on any essential matter; he need only hear and obey.

The Roman Church has therefore been bold in its doctrine of the Spirit. Instead of the pious reminiscence of Jesus which suffices much liberal Protestantism as its doctrine of the Holy Spirit — "far, far away like bells at evening pealing" — the Roman doctrine of the Spirit has been realistic and contemporary. It has affirmed unequivocally, if it has not manifested uniformly, the immediate presence of the divine Spirit. If Rome has been as loyal as the Eastern church in its fidelity to the primitive faith, it has been as bold as the Society of Friends in claiming full possession of the Holy Spirit. This dual claim has made its ecclesiastical position strong beyond that of any other historic communion.



There have been, it is true, times in its past when the discrepancy between Catholic dogma and the body of environing secular knowledge was so great that Rome fell back upon the *credo quia impossibile est* and *credo quia absurdum est*. French apologists of the eighteenth century, for example, revived against the age of enlightenment this two-edged weapon which Tertullian first fashioned. It is true that at times churches seem to thrive upon such irrationality, particularly if the environing rationalism wants emotional character and moral power. But no church can endure permanently upon this basis. We are prepared to concede that the faith affirmed by a religion and the knowledge achieved by a science are not qualitatively identical, and are not habitually compassed in a single statement. We agree that inquiries into matters of fact, particularly such facts as are readily accessible for repeated experiment, together with the deductions drawn from these experiments, are not truth of the kind which is supposedly had from the manifestations of miracle or even from redemptive divine acts performed but once in history. We agree further that the judgments of value which religion can never wholly ignore are not in the same category as judgments upon matters of fact. Nevertheless, making the fullest allowance for the qualitative difference between the substance of religious faith and the body of scientific knowledge, no religion can hope to survive if its faith is perpetually pronounced intellectually absurd and impossible. Religious truth, like the truth of poetry, cannot be restricted to fact, but neither may it do violence to fact and factual truth. Despite an occasional excursus into irrationality as the ultimate apologetic, Rome has always returned to rationality, and has proposed a religion expected to command the consent of the reasonable human mind. Its whole apparatus for interpretation is addressed to such a mind.

Though Rome has never been in haste to promulgate new truths about nature and history, it has never put itself in the position of being denied them. Its *auctoritas interpretiva* has enabled it to domesticate within the faith ideas which century after century have become part of the assured knowledge of the race. It would be interesting, for example, to know just how and when Rome conceded that the earth goes round the sun,

whereas the biblical cosmogony proposes the other alternative, and whereas the first Copernicans were met with implacable opposition and persecution. Yet now Copernicanism is not incompatible with the faith once delivered. It is said that by the exercise of this same power Roman apologists are slowly introducing into the Catholic account of the processes of nature certain details of the theory of evolution, and that in the course of time Darwin may become as familiar and welcome a figure within the pale as Copernicus now is. Catholic biblical criticism has not remained wholly unaffected by the liberal Protestant inquiries of the last hundred years. The Catholic theory of the Scriptures still stands intact, but in Catholic writings upon such questions as that of the Synoptic gospels one can discern an infiltration not logically Roman in its origin nor wholly compatible with the traditional dogma as to the nature of the Bible.

To the onlooker the intellectual and moral processes by which these results are achieved do not appear entirely consistent with the traditional accounts of Catholic faith or wholly ingenuous. Yet the fact remains that truths more or less finally vindicated in other sources do eventually find their way into the ample faith of Rome. To those on the outside it would appear that such truth has been forced upon the church as an intellectual necessity, but Rome has been able to satisfy her own adherents that such truth, if not unequivocally announced from the first, has been at all times potentially present within the traditional body of doctrine. Rome professes to issue from these inevitable theological metamorphoses with its deposit of faith unimpaired and unmodified.

Protestants, therefore, probably overrate the ecclesiastical embarrassment created for the Roman Church by any present discrepancy between her faith and the thought of the world outside. Rome bides her own time, and if she has denied herself some of the freshness of the early worlds of scientific discovery, she has never had to darken her windows to the full daylight. Her dual strength lies in her strong feeling for tradition and her wholly contemporary power of interpretation. There is no doubt that in vesting final authority at any moment in a group of living men Rome has achieved as satisfactory a solution as



can be reached for the riddle of a faith supposedly final and sufficient, yet forever discovered to be inadequate to the immediate event and requiring accommodation to the time and place. Without some such principle and organ of interpretation no church can endure.

The exercise of this power of interpretation by Rome has been on the whole so discreet that many who speak with knowledge of the internal affairs of that communion do not doubt her power to adapt herself for centuries to come to our maturing knowledge of nature and history. They point out with good reason that a long record of such timely accommodation prophesies with reasonable certainty a similar accommodation for an indeterminate future.

Certain of these persons, however, regard with graver suspicion the increasing centralization of administrative power at Rome. Authority which formerly was delegated very widely, is being steadily recalled to be lodged in the papal city. These reporters assure us that the dome of St. Peter's and the roof of the Vatican are becoming over-heavy with this increasing burden of ecclesiastical responsibilities. If there is to be in the middle distance any such débâcle as 'the collapse of the Roman Catholic Church,' they look for this dramatic event in the form of a top-heavy structure falling in upon the life of simple piety beneath, rather than as a crumbling of the four walls of the fabric because of the inclement scientific weather outside.

Such persons assure us that passing discrepancies between Catholic dogma and modern science are not so serious for that church in the immediate future as is this perilous weight of an authority never before so highly centralized. They think that it is not humanly possible for any one man or for a few small groups of men to discharge effectively so many duties as now devolve upon the Curia. As an administrative machine modern Roman Catholicism is intensely provincial, and this provinciality or ultramontaniam is the one factor most likely to prove the undoing of Rome. If this be true, there is here a plain warning against the perils of ecclesiastical centralization, a danger to which many modern Protestant sects are by no means immune.

## III

*The Reformed Churches*

Nothing was further from the minds of the sixteenth-century reformers than a repudiation of Catholicism. The fourth and final book of Calvin's Institutes bears the caption, 'Of the Holy Catholic Church.' Calvin's attitude toward Rome was essentially the same as that which the Apologists had taken toward Judaism. He did not deny to Catholicism its original heavenly reference, but held that since the elder church had departed from the faith that reference had devolved upon the Reformed churches. He therefore found in Geneva the clearest earthly intimation of the church that is in heaven. As for Rome, by it "Satan has adulterated all that God had appointed for our salvation."

The Holy Catholic Church is for Calvin the invisible church, "the Church as it really is before God. . . . all the elect who have existed from the beginning of the world." But since this church and its membership is known only to God, man, while he believes in its existence, must be agnostic as to its limits. Hence Calvin's discussion of the Holy Catholic Church contented itself with describing the nature of the earthly counterpart or manifestation of the original but invisible society.

The visible church exists "wherever we see the word of God sincerely preached and heard, wherever we see the sacraments administered according to the institution of Christ." This universal church on earth "is the multitude collected out of all nations, who, though dispersed and far distant from each other, agree in one truth of divine doctrine. . . . The church is called Catholic or Universal, for two or three cannot be invented without dividing Christ; and this is impossible."

The treasure which the church is charged with keeping is the gospel of Christ's salvation. This treasure was the consummation of a divine self-revelation which had been long in process. To the patriarchs "secret revelations" were granted. "When God determined to give a more illustrious form to the church, he was pleased to commit and consign his word to writing, that



the priests might there seek what they were to teach the people." After the promulgation of the law it was not possible to add to the law or to subtract from it. New oracles seemed to appear in the prophecies, "not so new, however, but that they flowed from the law and had respect to it. For in so far as regards doctrine, they were only interpreters of the law, adding nothing to it but the prediction of future events."

Eventually in "*the last hour, the last times, the last days*, God revealed himself in Christ," and thereafter, "contented with the perfection of Christ's doctrine we . . . learn no new doctrine for ourselves, nor admit any one devised by others." Finally, "to banish all the inventions of the human mind" we have the apostles as "the sure and authentic amanuenses of the Holy Spirit; and therefore their writings are to be regarded as the oracles of God." To the church this cumulated treasure is committed. "To impart this blessing to us, the keys have been given to the church. . . . Beyond the pale of the church no forgiveness, no salvation can be hoped for." And the church is empowered with "the authority of delivering dogmas and the interpretation of them."

So far, the account of the church departs at no essential point from the traditional Roman view. Indeed, read in retrospect, all this sounds more Catholic than Protestant, yet it was upon premises such as this that all the great Reformed churches were founded. Their biblical Christianity aspired to be and claimed to be no less Catholic than that which had centred at Rome, indeed to be the Catholicism which the papacy had forfeited. There was in the mind of a man like Calvin no question of making good a new claim against a long established predecessor. He was simply affirming the Catholicism which had been since the beginning of the world, rid at last, as he thought, of the unhappy interventions of the Adversary whose victories over Rome had deprived that church of its Catholicity.

The nascent Protestantism, however, in the Reformed doctrine of the church begins to make its appearance in Calvin's account of the interpretation of the gospel. For some reason best known to Himself, said Calvin, God never chose to confine himself to the law and the gospel, but added to these a succes-

sion of human interpreters. While it is true that "God deprives man of the power of producing any new doctrine, in order that he alone may be our master in spiritual teaching," the church has nevertheless been committed to apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors, and teachers. Prophets, apostles, and evangelists belonged to the past and have only occasionally been raised up in latter times; their office "has no place in churches duly constituted." The two persons "with whom the church can never dispense" are pastors and teachers, "and to the teachers is committed the interpretation of Scripture only."

Calvin had no doubt of the finality and sufficiency of Scripture. He could not concede that of itself it needs interpretation. His account of the teacher is therefore labored and highly ingenious. It is true that God does not dwell among us in visible presence and does not declare his will by his own lips; therefore he uses the ministry of men by making them his substitutes, "just as an artificer uses a tool for any purpose." He might have acted by himself or employed angels. But he has chosen to use teachers, because in this way "he declares his condescension towards us," and gives us "a most excellent and useful training to humility, when he accustoms us to obey his word though preached by men like ourselves, or, it may be, our inferiors in worth. . . . When a feeble man, sprung from the dust, speaks in the name of God, we give the best proof of our piety and obedience by listening with docility to his servant, though not in any respect our superior. Accordingly he hides the treasure of his heavenly wisdom in frail earthen vessels, that he may have a more certain proof of the estimation in which it is held by us."

The Protestant teacher is here a very different sort of person from the Roman ecclesiastic. There is no intimation in anything that Calvin has to say of the office of the teacher that the Bible actually requires interpretation or that the teacher says anything which may not be found in the text itself. The teacher seems rather to be a mechanical device for reaffirming biblical truths, line upon line, precept upon precept. To have conceded the occasion and necessity for any vital interpretation would have been a repudiation of the major premise of Protestantism,

and this concession Calvin nowhere makes. The teacher is therefore a much less authoritative person, both in theory and practice, than his counterpart among the higher Roman clergy. He is not vested with any present divine power of interpretation. In so far as he is supposed to be the vehicle of the Holy Spirit, that Spirit manifests itself not in independent and contemporary pronouncements upon religious truth, but in a passive deference to the sacred word already given in Scripture.

One cannot fail to catch the note of patrician toleration which Calvin shows toward his fellow teachers. He had evidently listened to more than one dull sermon and had no scruples in saying that many of these teachers might be "our inferiors in worth." God employs them in his economy not to state clearly a truth which is stated equivocally or ambiguously in the sources, but rather to discipline us in the virtue of humility. In short the Christian teacher as an interpreter reappears in Calvinism shorn of the vital powers which supposedly reside in the higher Roman clergy. Listening to sermons can add nothing to our knowledge of Christian faith and practice, since all this has long before been made plain in "the last hour, the last times, the last days." It can only serve to remind us that God requires us to be humble before Him and His strange method of self-revelation. It may well be that Protestants need to be disciplined in humility, but it is doubtful whether we can best cultivate this virtue by sitting for a lifetime at the feet of those who are "our inferiors in worth." On the Roman theory you actually learn something more about divine truth when the interpreter speaks.

Moreover Calvin was not able to exclude the nascent individualism of the Protestant temper. He says that not all the heads of true doctrine are on the same level. There are some points which are fixed and undoubted as the essentials of religion, but there are others which may be the legitimate subject of controversy, and on which difference of opinion can be allowed without impairing the unity of the church. True, the best thing is to be agreed on all points, but since every man is at some point involved in the mists of error, we must either have no church at all or allow for differences of individual



opinion. Having said so much, Calvin characteristically begins to retreat, and seeks to recover with the left hand what he has grudgingly given with the right, "Here, however, I have no wish to patronize even the minutest errors, as if I thought it right to foster them by flattery or connivance."

Calvin's logic, at this point as at many others, discovers a weakness at the joints of the armor. No one was more aware than he of the vulnerable areas in his system, and no one has ever been less successful in protecting himself against the perils of his own il-logic. The last remark, just quoted, is characteristic of him at the moments when his apologetic is weakest. He was unwilling to concede that the Bible, his seat of religious authority, was not final and sufficient and therefore that it required actual interpretation, yet at the same time he was unable to stem the rising tide of diversified opinion which manifested itself in the Reformed churches. His solution of this problem, an arbitrary distinction between the fixed essentials of religion and matters upon which a difference of opinions might be tolerated, introduced into his system a double standard for religious truth that is not compatible with that quality of integrity which any theory of Catholic truth must require.

This account of the nature of churches founded upon and manifesting a biblical Catholicism worked inevitable difficulties in the centuries which ensued. Professor Schneider, writing of 'The Puritan Mind' says that "the appeal to the Bible merely made matters worse, for the Scriptures are sufficiently vague to stimulate rather than settle argument. No book not in need of interpretation can long remain a Bible. Certainly the chief value of the Christian Bible for the Puritan was the fact that it could sanction anything at all. The appeal to its authority was synonymous with the attack on ecclesiastical authority and resulted in intellectual individualism or anarchy; for in contrast to the definiteness of the dogmas of the church and school, the Bible itself is no authority at all. It merely invites individual interpretation." It took Protestantism three hundred years to concede that point and to accept the full consequences of its principle of the rights of the individual conscience. So long as it holds to Calvin's position, any Protestant

church is hopelessly illogical and handicapped in comparison either with the Church of Rome or the Society of Friends. Orthodox Protestantism lays claim to a possession of the Holy Spirit, yet that Spirit has nothing important to say, but contents itself with rehearsing its own prior pronouncements. It is the echo of its own Golden Age of inspiration. Protestantism has come only very slowly and timidly to the Quaker confidence in the Inner Light and has preferred in the main to hark back to Scripture. Therefore its teachers, who are supposed to interpret that Scripture, have no real vocation, for such measure of the Holy Spirit as they possess is reminiscent rather than contemporary in its utterance. It refuses to concede the real occasion for any increment of religious truth, even as a clarification of obscure primitive accounts of faith and practice.

At this point Biblical Christianity has not been as wise as either Judaism or Romanism. Judaism has always insisted upon the qualitative distinction between the divine text and the human interpretation, and has never accorded to the scribe an authority equal to that of the law-giver and prophet; nevertheless it gave him a real and necessary task to do. Romanism in making full provision for a power of living and contemporary interpretation has provided in advance for every emergency which may arise. Fundamentalism is at this crucial point hopelessly handicapped. It expects its clergy to expound the Catholic Bible, and will not be content with scribal hypotheses. Yet it does not guarantee the inspiration of the interpreter, as Rome does, and leaves the truths of the Bible at the mercy of unaccredited individual ministers.

The Jewish and Roman methods of meeting this situation in which a primitive and supposedly final deposit of faith must be accommodated to changed conditions, are both logical. Of the two the Roman method is probably the more vital, though also the more liable to ecclesiastical abuse at the hands of unscrupulous churchmen. Biblical Christianity of the conservative Protestant type is by contrast ill-equipped and ineffectual. But there is no indication that it feels itself seriously embarrassed by its dilemma or impelled to seek some way of escape from the dilemma.

This Biblical Catholicism is probably the larger numerical part of organized Protestantism. It is bold in its claim to the whole gospel, and concedes nothing to Rome on its right or to modernism on its left. If there be any slightest truth in the statement that most churches are dying, but that the Roman Church will probably outlast most others, this is what we should expect if fundamentalism is the one considerable alternative to Romanism. Living men are on the whole a more satisfactory seat of religious authority than is a closed book, even though the book may have been written by authors more saintly than many of its subsequent interpreters. The doctrine at stake is really that of the present possession by living men of a Holy Spirit, and at this point Biblical Christianity is equivocal and uncertain. It is less sure of that Spirit in its clergy than in its book. Rome, for example, may very well discover the theory of evolution within the text of Scripture itself, but so far as fundamentalism is concerned, it seems from the outset to be denied any such happy issue out of its increasing intellectual afflictions.

We can only conclude, therefore, that of the two or three still vocal claimants to Catholicism this type has the least prospect of success and in the nature of the case will probably be the first to disappear. It seems an historical tragedy that so much indubitable personal piety should insist upon hastening thus its own institutional end. It says much for Biblical Christianity that one of Thomas Huxley's friends quotes him to this effect: "In his earlier experiences of sickness and suffering, he had found that the most effective helpers of mankind were not the scientist or the philosopher, but the parson, and the sister, and the Bible woman."

Meanwhile those of us who know ourselves to stand outside all such would-be Catholicism wonder why churches so conceived and conducted have lasted so long and at this late date number so many adherents. Given the steadily rising level of a knowledge which is not compatible with the various Catholic dogmas at issue, we are baffled that these anachronisms persist so vigorously and at such dimensions.

We can only conclude that the claim to Catholicity makes of



itself a strong appeal to certain types of the religious nature. This claim may present to those who concede it certain intellectual difficulties, but the felt force of the Catholic appeal overrides the discrepancies between faith and knowledge. The deeply religious man naturally wishes to belong to a Catholic church. It was here that the Roman modernists of a quarter of a century ago made their stand. They had no wish to join, after excommunication from Rome, any liberal Protestant body, though they received many overtures to do so. With one mind and heart they longed to remain in Catholic communion. How often, during the last days, did Tyrrell say, "Cut off you are helpless."

We are dealing here with a permanent religious principle which it is well to recognize. Harnack in his *Expansion of Christianity* has stated it clearly and boldly: "The more peremptory and exclusive is the claim of faith which any religion makes, the more trustworthy and secure does that religion seem to the majority."

Professedly Catholic churches are therefore not merely the shelter for weak and timid natures. They are more often the normal institutional environment for strong natures. There is much still to be said for the abstract idea of Catholicism, even though the difficulties which attend its translation into achieved historical fact are considerable, and in the end insuperable.

Meanwhile the Holy Catholic Church remains the society that many eager hearts expect. And at the price of certain patent inconsistencies many religious persons will prefer to maintain their membership in imperfect churches which make that claim rather than renounce the idea altogether. The strength of societies so organized seems therefore to lie not in the detailed substance of any Catholic claim but in the general nature of the claim itself.

#### IV

##### *Neo-catholicism*

There are today various movements afoot in the Protestant world which look to some rehabilitation of the Catholic idea. These movements concede the insufficiency of the premises of

historic Catholicism thus far, whether Roman or Protestant, but they are not willing to renounce the Catholic idea. Some of these movements are merely mechanical and ecclesiastical, others are sincere and ambitious attempts to compass the religious idea in its entirety. Two or three of these deserve mention.

Let it be conceded at once that so much of Protestantism as has given up the hope of a Catholicism which is to rest upon an infallible Bible has parted company with its own past. This break with its own early orthodoxy is in many ways far more significant than the original break with Rome, since it concedes skepticism as to the possibility of a Holy Catholic Church on the conventional lines. But whatever else the liberal Protestant knows, he knows too much about the workings of religion in history to believe any longer in the possibility of squaring a supposedly final revelation of truth, given to a church at its birth, with the subsequent interpretations of that truth which time makes necessary. Such interpretation is either patently inadequate or illogical. If the validity and finality of the primitive deposit is defended, the interpretation suffers by contrast. If the interpretation is vital and contemporary, it impairs the supposed sufficiency of the original truth. On the whole, liberal Protestantism is moving steadily in the Quaker direction. If it cannot trust the Inner Light, then its world is a sombre and darkening one.

We have conceded, however, the appeal which the claim to Catholicism makes upon many persons of deeply religious nature. Now unless the true genius of Protestantism is essentially individualistic and atomic, pointing to a world in which churches are no longer possible because differences of religious opinion become so highly specialized that men cannot combine for worship and work, the question remains, what Protestantism has to offer the world in the place of a Roman or fundamentalist Catholicism.

In general, Protestantism, though it despairs of a Catholic church in the traditional sense of that word, still hopes for a universal church. How this church is to be achieved and what it will be like remains a riddle. For every endeavor of this neo-

catholic kind merely raises the old question of tradition and interpretation. We have to begin our universal church with the material at hand, and that material, once supposed to be Catholic, is now discovered not to be such. Whether this material can be reworked after another pattern is an open question.

In particular, Protestantism as a whole hopes to confront Romanism with a re-union of its own sects, which shall yield a single non-roman type of Christianity commensurate, at least in its numbers and resources, with the dimensions of the elder church. The plans for re-union present, however, the gravest theoretical difficulties. Most of them tacitly imply what some of them openly require, an initial repudiation of all claims to Catholicity made by the several denominations at the time of their birth. If the intimation of a prior Catholicity must be renounced by the parts, no neo-catholicism can be achieved in the whole.

The working plans for this mosaic Protestantism of tomorrow suggest that each constituent church shall make to the prospective whole that contribution which is most clearly indicated by its own particular religious genius. If, however, such contribution be made in good faith, it must consist of precisely those convictions which were the original warrant for the founding of the denomination. If those convictions were valid then, they remain valid now. If they had no validity then, but served only as a temporary emphasis of some neglected aspect of religion which had long been familiar to all Christians, then it is an open question whether the organization of a separate church to defend this fractional truth was wise or necessary.

If some Christians may be sprinkled at baptism, then no Christian needs to be immersed and the case for immersion falls to the ground. Immersion becomes an interesting idiosyncrasy of a few Christians, not an essential for all Christians. If all ministers of religion must be ordained by bishops, then no ministers can rightly serve churches who have been ordained merely by a council of their peers. But if a congregational council can fitly ordain a man, then the demand for episcopal ordination exceeds the religious necessities of the case and becomes the preference of those who find in that practice merely a decorous



recognition of the fact that religion as we know it lives in history and is not a timeless abstraction.

This is the sort of issue which has given rise to the several denominations and which still sustains them. It is beside the mark to invite a plague upon both their houses when we meet an issue of this sort. A Religion of the Spirit might well find all such requirements irrelevant, but the Religion of the Spirit belongs in heaven not on earth, in so far as such a religion proposes to dispense with human ideas, manners, and institutions.

For Protestantism as a whole the dilemma is that the only significant contribution which a single denomination can make to organic re-union is that which, if faithful to its own history, it is prohibited from making. To give less than this is to give nothing. To give this is to deny the faith once delivered to the fathers. The theory that each of us is to contribute to the whole the particular bit of religious wisdom that he has gleaned from the past four hundred years, and that the sum of this experience can then be added up as a Christianity for the twentieth century, is much too simple.

Conservative Protestant churches, therefore, which still hold to the Catholic validity of their private claims, are in theory consistent when they look with distrust upon most invitations to re-union. They see plainly what is implied for them in an acceptance of any such invitations, and if they hold stoutly to the continuing validity of their position they are logical in declining the invitation. Even those of us who make no such claims still feel a residual reluctance to turn state's evidence against our fathers, who with courage and devotion, if not with pain and death, laid the foundations of the particular church to which we belong.

The most that the avowed liberal can hope from re-union is some reduction of the competition and useless reduplication of Protestant churches in the field. He has, and from his premises he is warranted in having, a holy impatience at a waste which seems to him to serve no purpose. The hypothetical visitor from Mars, to whom such matters are conventionally referred for dispassionate appraisal, were he to be confronted with the church situation in the average American town, could only con-

clude that Christianity either lacks the quality necessary to a universal religion or is very ill served by the present means for vindicating that universality.

This appeal to efficiency, however, is characteristically modern and is not essentially an appeal to faith. In its common-sense forms and when preached as an economic and administrative necessity for the dwindling congregations, all this is a poor religious substitute for the Catholic claim. Intense religious conviction never stops to count the cost, and will always find a means for surviving the creature emergency. On the ground of necessary religious conviction, that is of conviction necessary to the life of a church, we cannot expect the commercial argument to do duty for the Catholic ideal. Though we cannot subscribe to their dogmas, we still have a certain intellectual respect for the conscientious old guard which dies but does not surrender.

A far bolder and more positive ideal, proposed for liberal Protestantism, is that of an eclectic religion. Such a religion would concede Catholicity to no existing creed, but in fashioning a universal faith would make empirical use of the religious experience of the race thus far. Some persons interested in such a possibility would be content to confine themselves to Christian sources. Most of them, however, would be more logical and thoroughgoing and would make the fullest use of non-Christian sources as well. This is the sort of endeavor to which 'bibles of the world's sacred literatures' are offered as a fitting preamble.

But somehow, contrary to all reasonable expectation, such bibles do not sell in large numbers and such religions do not attract many adherents. On paper the plan ought to work; in practice it does not. One is often hard put to it to understand why so plausible a program meets with so little response. The difficulty probably is that all such proposals are born of the critical rather than the creative powers of the mind. They are the work of editors rather than prophets. They belong to the sophisticated rather than the spontaneous periods of human history. They lack all "freshness of the early world," in which significant religious movements first greet the light. At such times, it is true, men have a dispassionate intellectual ability to

see what a universal religion and a Catholic church ought to be, but they are strangely wanting in any power to bring this synoptic vision to pass either as personal religion or as a church.

History is not reassuring here. The hope of just such eclectic religions has been strong at various times in the past. It was a commonplace toward the end of the classical age. There was then a wealth of popular mythology, public cultus, and speculation, which bold spirits proposed to compound into a single eclectic religion. Neoplatonism was one of the expressions of this temper. It drew upon a vast amount of material, it had at its service many wise and devout minds; but as we study it in retrospect a suggestion of futility attends its endeavors from the first. In particular, and as Harnack points out, it was wholly lacking in any genius for organization; it wanted just that cutting edge of particular conviction which men seem to use when they carve out churches in history.

We owe this hope of an eclectic religion for our own time to our contemporary study of the history of religions. This inquiry, if scientifically prosecuted, concedes to Christianity no monopoly of religion, but treats all facts in the field as aspects of a general principle. This study, in its tentative appraisal of the value of the several historic religions, may conclude with Royce that "the Christian religion is, thus far at least, man's most impressive vision of salvation, and his principal glimpse of the home-land of the spirit," but it is not committed to that conclusion in advance and does not exclude other significant visions and glimpses. It is, however, a cultural misreading of the record to assume that a student of the history of religions qualifies by his inquiries as the prophetic founder of a universal religion. No serious student in this field makes any such claim for himself and he would repudiate such hopes if they were expected of him. It is only a popular and superficial mind which hopes from a general survey of the history of religions to discover and to set in operation the one eclectic religion that shall satisfy us all.

A further alternative is a reorganization of our churches on the basis of the 'Christianity-common-to-us-all.' This plausible suggestion assumes that such a Christianity exists in fact and



can be identified, or did once exist in fact and can be recovered.

Much impetus has been given to modern historical inquiry into Christian origins by the hope that so far from being a purely academic interest, it may yield us the primitive gospel which shall suffice us. There have been few chapters in the record of theology at once so thorough and yet from the present religious standpoint so unsatisfactory as this. Perhaps the initial question in this whole area is whether or not Jesus himself was a Christian. If Christianity is a religion which makes Jesus the subject of its thought and the object of its devotion then plainly Jesus was not a Christian. Yet to common sense it seems little short of grotesque to say that Jesus was not the first among many Christian brethren.

If, however, Jesus be excluded from his own religion, there is no single 'Christianity-common-to-us-all' that history can identify. He is no sooner gone than different and rival theories about his person begin to appear. No single christology can be found in possession of the field in default of all others. From the outset he is construed variously as a man adopted by God to the divine sonship, or as a preëxistent Son of God, or as the Logos incarnated in human nature. Sectarianism is in existence from the first, if we take as our criterion men's varying opinions about Christ.

If, as would seem to be more generous and sensible, we allow Jesus to have professed the religion that bears his name, the record does not suffice. Here, if anywhere, the necessity of interpretation becomes a grave duty. Though we wipe out the intervening centuries and, standing before the open gospels, try to see and hear clearly, the figure and the words are not sharp enough to yield a conclusive body of ideas for contemporary religion. We have still to take the personal risk of deciding what Jesus meant by his words and deeds in the day of their saying and doing, and then whether these words and deeds still impinge upon our own living. History cannot recover for us a primitive and sufficient 'Christianity-common-to-us-all.'

If we try to arrive at such a result by cancelling out the peculiarities of particular denominations in our own time, we get a lifeless residuum. Religion presupposes a maximizing frame of

mind. It encourages us to make the most of things, to follow its intimations to their farthest conclusion. The reduction of Christianity to a lowest common denominator requires a minimizing mental process which, in its direction, is essentially irreligious. No man does his religion any real service by making its faith and practice as meagre as possible, even though he be guided by the felt necessity for toleration. Of this issue Tyrrell says with profound truth:

As the branches of the tree of life bifurcate and diverge, they grow more characterised and unlike one another. So of the varieties of the religious idea. They do not converge towards, but diverge from, a point of sameness. Schism is their very law. So far as they are alive and vigorous, each pushes forward in its own direction and away from others; reunion becomes less and less possible. The tendency towards reunion among the Christian sects of to-day is the result of weariness and decay; of scepticism as to the value of their several systems. The withered branches break off at their point of bifurcation. Union is restored by going backwards to an original state of indetermination.

No wonder, therefore, that the attempt to reduce Christianity to some lowest common denominator fails to stir the religious mind. The process is at best a lifeless one, more often than otherwise prompted, in Tyrrell's hard but true words, by "weariness and scepticism."

Still others, despairing of finding in Christianity any common ground for the diverse minds of men, would commend the future to the keeping of the pure emotion of Christian charity. They think that if only we had the courage to 'love and do what we like,' we might find a happy issue out of our ecclesiastical afflictions. They cite Browning's lines:

Oh, love of those first Christian days!  
— Fanned so soon into a blaze,  
From the spark preserved by the trampled sect,  
That the antique sovereign Intellect,  
Which then sat ruling in the world,  
Like a change in dreams was hurled  
From the throne he reigned upon:  
You looked up and he was gone.

This is stimulating verse, but bad history. No academic examiner in this field, coming upon these lines in a candidate's paper, would accept them as an accurate account of the dis-

tion between Apollinarianism and Nestorianism. And if the advocate of charity should reply, not without warrant, that the distinction may not have been one of the first importance, it still remains true that the dominant characteristic of the early church was, in Edwin Hatch's phrases, "a tendency to speculate" and "a tendency to define." This double tendency can only be construed as a victory of the "antique sovereign Intellect" within Christianity, not as its defeat by Christianity.

The modern appeal to love-minus-thought is not convincing. A genuine charity can teach us how to differ from other men without acrimony. It can remove bitterness and anger which must always obscure the mind's vision of truth. But positively it cannot answer in detail all the questions which the mind is capable of asking and which deserve an answer. We do the cause of Christianity no service when we tell a man that if only his heart were kind his head would be clear.

These various proposals, some of them the resort of ecclesiastics in extremity, others the dreams of a purely reflective temper wanting any contact with the world of stubborn actuality, the remainder the suggestions of a sentimental piety which has never been able to cope with this realistic world, do not seem to offer any near prospect of a rehabilitated Catholicism. Indeed, wherever and in so far as these results are achieved, the Catholicism which they profess to vindicate suffers by contrast both with its Roman and its elder Protestant originals. It is an imitation, or at the best an invention, rather than creation. It is like our church architecture, it lacks the courage to use the material at hand honestly and to fashion that material as the material itself suggests; it is a timid echo of some Gothic or Georgian past. The architect cannot build us a contemporary church for the simple reason that we are not yet able to tell him what the contemporary religion is which is to be expressed and for which he is to make provision. We blame him for his subserviency to tradition, but the fault is ultimately ours, not his. Over the whole attempt to rehabilitate Catholicism there still lingers the dogma of the pattern and the copy. We shall get nowhere with this matter of churches until we have freed ourselves from this dogma, whether the church to be



copied be a heavenly one or an historic one. Religion cannot live upon imitation, and in its greatest periods the tendency to imitate has been entirely wanting.

## V

*The Genius of Protestantism*

The truth is that no one knows what Protestantism really means in the terms of churches. If its genius be ultimately and irrevocably individualistic, organized institutional religion becomes more and more difficult. As a matter of immediate fact one seems to see Protestant churches trailing away and dissipating at the extreme critical left into an anarchic or amorphous Christianity. By a kind of paradox Protestant churches train people to do without churches. They develop the critical faculties and invite initiative to the point at which it becomes difficult to share with good conscience in corporate acts, particularly acts of worship.

It may be that Protestantism thus prophesies that ultimate heaven in which so far from there being an original church to receive us back there is no church at all awaiting us. Certainly many Christians find that the formal institution is a stage in their spiritual Odyssey, one which was necessary and which they are glad to have had, but one which is not permanently necessary to them. Some persons, and these men and women of impeccable character and of the most serious intention, seem to outgrow churches, at least such churches as are generally accessible. This fact is a criticism, not of them but of institutional Christianity as it now exists.

The more loyal of them continue to go to the churches to which they belong, yet they do so not because they think these churches minister directly to their own needs, but simply because they 'believe in supporting the institution.' They have a vague theory as to the contribution which such institutions make to the whole social life of man, and are prepared at the expense of much time, money, and patient tolerance to buttress the walls of the institution. Yet the days of any such fabric are numbered when it cannot stand in its own right and must be

thus 'supported.' This loyalty may perpetuate existing organizations for a little while, but it is the confession in advance of institutional defeat, and the direct plea for loyalty as such is the last resort of a society which has no adequate apologetic and makes this last direct appeal to one of the noble capacities of human nature, a capacity quite as often abused as rightly used.

At the moment, liberal Protestantism, in want of any other adequate appeal, invites the membership of those who would frankly reconstrue the Christian life as a prospective adventure or an unfinished experiment. This invitation has the immediate advantage of appealing to the capacity for heroism in the young and the empirical tempers of the more mature. The very absence of any guarantee of certainty, the candid withholding of the event until after the endeavor, are in accord with the mental and moral moods of the world around us.

Of the fervor and sincerity of this appeal there is no doubt. It characterizes much that is best in the emancipated religious spirit of our time. It restores to faith the necessary element of risk. Yet all such appeals ignore certain of their own premises. When a man seriously experiments, he does not experiment at random. He is trying to verify a theory which he has formed in advance, and this theory presupposes certain known factors. And when a man goes on an adventure he is sustained not merely by the goal that lures him, but quite as much by the known and loved world he has left behind him. In the journals of the world's boldest adventurers there is more appeal to the point of departure for help than there is reference to the goal to be attained. In an emergency the thrust is more powerful than the lure.

If then we use these metaphors of experiment and adventure we must do so with a full and clear recognition of certain given facts which warrant them. A religion so construed and practised must have its premises, and perhaps for the very reason that the result is not guaranteed in advance, there is greater necessity for exact knowledge as to the point of departure and the course to be pursued. Adventures and experiments in religion, if they are undertaken, must be clear-headed. This is an area in which it is both easy and costly to make mistakes. Mak-

ing a Christian experiment ought to have the high seriousness which attends the measurement of the speed of light in a Californian laboratory. Going on a Christian adventure is a risk not to be entered into unadvisedly or lightly, but with the same prevision which men employ when they propose to fly to the poles or climb the Himalayas. This language becomes a menace, if its thoughtless use implies indifference to all the known factors involved which warrant the adventure or experiment. At least, no such fashionable reconstruction of the religious life should serve as the sanctuary for muddle-headed persons who propose it as a substitute for hard brain-work and true moral courage.

We press these metaphors to their conclusion. If a church is simply a society of research-workers in a laboratory or a company of adventurers on the march, it still undertakes to support you while you are so engaged. It endows you or equips you at the start. The relationship is not a one-sided affair, in which the communicant contributes everything and the church nothing. The institution, in inviting your membership, undertakes to fulfill its half of a contract which implies obligations on both sides. The elder church gives its guarantee of salvation and the assurance of membership in a Catholic society. The emancipated church must have something to offer of equal worth and appeal.

If our liberal Protestant churches are in process of becoming nothing more than groups of well-meaning persons met in a corporate endeavor to do the world some practical good, then plainly it is the prerogative of any such person to decide whether this is his best way of doing good. The general revival of interest in the theory and conduct of worship is itself a sign that liberal Protestantism has not been content to define itself as a perennial social-service committee meeting. If the church is no more than that, then any man is justified in taking toward it the attitude to which he is driven by many committees — they are a waste of time.

A church, even the most progressive and emancipated church, if it is to prevail strongly and persist vigorously, must give its members something which religiously they cannot afford to go without. The elder church offered its Catholicity, and the assur-



ances implied in that Catholicity. That was, and still is for many, the secret of its powerful appeal. What has the avowedly non-catholic church to offer in the place of that final and static Catholicity which it believes to be an unrealizable ideal?

We have considered the more obvious substitutes, and they do not seem to be wholly satisfactory. They are neither commensurate with the claims of Catholicism nor adequate for the deeper religious needs of men. The answer to our question is by no means clear, since the definition of Protestantism as a religious principle still remains imperfect. But certain analogies point a way and are in this connection suggestive.

There is, for example, a brief familiar poem of Wordsworth's which seems to me, by inference, to throw some light on these matters.

My heart leaps up when I behold  
A rainbow in the sky:  
So was it when my life began;  
So is it now I am a man;  
So be it when I shall grow old;  
Or let me die!  
The Child is Father of the Man;  
And I could wish my days to be  
Bound each to each by natural piety.

These lines were written in 1802, when the poet was thirty-two years old. The doctrine of the child as father of the man is a constant one with Wordsworth, markedly characteristic of him, and has here its briefest and best known statement in the one bald line. But that line, so often lifted from its context, is an incident in this short poem, not its main theme.

Wordsworth's later life was one of dull and respectable tranquillity. His early years, however, had been filled with hard vicissitude. His parents had died in childhood. He had put through his schooling at Hawkshead as a care-free young animal. Cambridge had yielded him little or nothing. There had been idling in London and wanderings afoot on the continent. Finally he was drawn into the Revolutionary movement in France, and his mind was deeply stirred by its heady hopes. He had fallen in love with a French girl and become the father of an

illegitimate child. On his return to England he found himself a stranger in his own land. The English declaration of war on France shook the foundations of his whole faith in the moral order of history. He found a transient bitter solace in the philosophy of the Godwin circle. He wandered without friends or occupation on Salisbury Plain and in the depths of Wales. At last he was joined by his sister Dorothy, and they two added Coleridge to their intimate society. The tender solicitude of the one and the stimulus of the other released the poet in Wordsworth, and by the time he was thirty he had come to rest in the Lake Country where he was born, and had begun his reflection on the history of a poet's mind which was the theme of his 'Prelude.'

His problem was how to create or to discover in retrospect any unity in a life so broken up into areas of experience which seemed to have no necessary relation to one another. He had to bring order out of chaos. The assurance of the coherence and continuity of his life — what he himself later called its "central peace" — he found not by looking inward at himself but by looking out upon nature. Wordsworth was an accurate observer of nature, and a lover of nature, but his love was never dispassionate. Nature was not his major theme, the mind of man was his constant subject, and he was interested in nature primarily because it gave to the mirror of the mind its first objects, which made upon the mind that initial strong impression, never afterward effaced.

He means then in these lines just quoted that, despite the discontinuity and lack of unity in the history of his own spirit, he is encouraged to believe in, and indeed helped to find, such unity when he looks at one of the constant facts of the natural order. The constancy of nature without vindicated the continuity of the life within. The man who now looks at the rainbow is the same person who as a boy looked at it long before. And one must suppose that, notwithstanding the decline in his poetic powers, the Wordsworth of seventy-five could still repeat these lines in good faith, as he had hoped and prophesied. This reassurance as to the integrity of his own inner history, as his mind continued to mirror the constant facts of nature, he de-

scribes as a principle of natural piety which binds his days each to each.

Our own less vivid experiences of nature will confirm the truth of this poem. The places which we have known well for years, which we have loved constantly, to which the mind reverts in absence, and to which the body returns when occasion allows, have this curious power to unify life. These scenes lie always at an altitude above the level of the confused and inconsequential happenings of single days or years. Life seen or reviewed in the presence of this help from nature straightens or flattens out, assumes a certain order and underlying consistency. We have only to go back to some childhood home in the deep country to see what we cannot always discover in the dust of the city, how the years hang together. And this experience is possible and true, as Wordsworth realized, not merely because nature is constant, but because we are made to know that the mind which observes her constancy today is the mind which registered her first impressions then. In spite of everything, I am still the same man.

Now this felt need for inner unity, order, coherence, continuity is one of the occasions for religion, and the gratification of that need can be described only as an experience of religion. The 'simplicity' of the religious life is more accurately translated as its singleness.

For by contrast the essence of irreligion is the life in which tomorrow and tomorrow and tomorrow creep on wanting any intimation from without or consciousness within that they have anything to do with one another as parts of a single life. That bleak passage in *Macbeth* is the voice of a soul that has exiled itself from all that we mean by religion. There is no longer anything in the world without or the world within to give order to the insane sequence of events which are disintegrating the whole nature of that madman. The genius of irreligion is the disharmony and discontinuity of the self within, not merely divided but hopelessly shattered into meaningless and inconsequential fragments.

If we live for anything beyond the zest of the moment, we come in our maturity to covet above all else this principle that



Wordsworth called "natural piety." Life is filled with vicissitude and it is by no means always easy to get straightforwardly on from one area of experience to another. Left to ourselves we should often question whether the man who is today having this experience is the man who yesterday had that very different experience. The witness from within is equivocal and often points to an instability of the self or plurality of selves. It is the reassurance of the constant outer world, recognized as the same and still registering upon the world within, which gives us confidence that our days are bound each to each in one experience.

Now the truth of the major institutions of human society lies somewhere in this area. They are in part a process of social self-organization for the purpose of serving common interests. But that is not all they are. They are the guarantors of the continuity and coherence of racial experience. They keep the generations in line and hold them together.

Meanwhile they serve the individual, during the brief course of his own life, as a centre of constant reference. These institutions do not hang in mid air. They have their concrete manifestation in buildings, ceremonies, and the like.

Under present conditions we draw most of this natural piety of our lives from our contact with great institutions rather than from our felt place in the order of nature. We are a race of city-dwellers, once removed from nature and in some measure dulled to its intimations. But we are not insensible to such institutions as the state, universities and colleges, the trades and professions. We look to these to reassure us that our days do not fall apart into a meaningless chaos, and that we are ourselves spirits with a consistent history.

Nearly a century and a half ago Edmund Burke said:

To be attached to the subdivision, to love the little platoon we belong to in society, is the first principle (the germ as it were) of public affections. It is the first link in the series by which we proceed towards a love to our country and to mankind. The interest of that portion of the social arrangement is a trust in the hands of all those who compose it; and as none but bad men would justify it in abuse, none but traitors would barter it away for their own personal advantage.

Modern history has vindicated the truth of these words. The recent books on the War, in so far as they have been written by

soldiers, have all confessed that their authors reached in their history a time of profound skepticism as to the importance of the alleged aims and issues of the War. Many of them were never far removed from the ragged edge of actual loss of all mental poise. So Siegfried Sassoon writes:

My mind was in a muddle; the War was too big an event for one man to stand alone. All I knew was that I'd lost my faith in it, and there was nothing left to believe in except "the Battalion spirit."

Sassoon is not kind to churches, when he speaks of the War, but he never says an ungenerous thing of "the Battalion." It was for him the source of a natural piety that prevented his ever losing control of himself. If the Somme was for those who lived through it anything but a slough that "lighted fools the way to dusty death," it was redeemed by "the Battalion spirit." That spirit stood between men and the loss of their sanity. This is an extreme case of the way in which human beings, in great need, draw from the coherence and integrity of a human institution reassurance as to the continuity of their own inner history. Whatever we may think about the War, we have never questioned the 'natural piety' of the common soldier.

In another part of the 'Reflections on the Revolution in France,' from which the above passage is taken, Burke elaborated his thesis at greater length and with wider implications. He is inveighing against the theory of the state as being merely a social contract, and is insisting upon the natural piety of its members:

Society is indeed a contract. Subordinate contracts for objects of mere occasional interest may be dissolved at pleasure — but the state ought not to be considered as nothing better than a partnership in a trade of pepper and coffee, calico or tobacco, or some other such low concern, to be taken up for a little temporary interest, and to be dissolved at the fancy of the parties. It is to be looked on with reverence; because it is not a partnership in things subservient only to the gross animal existence of a temporary and perishable nature. It is a partnership in all science; a partnership in all art; a partnership in every virtue, and in all perfection. As the means of such a partnership cannot be obtained in many generations, it becomes a partnership not only between those who are living, but between those who are living, those who are dead, and those who are to be born. Each contract of each particular state is but a clause in the great primeval contract of eternal society, linking the lower with the higher natures, connecting the visible and invisible world.

Plainly the thought of the state gave to Burke that same assurance of the coherence and continuity of his life which Wordsworth found in the felt constancy of nature. Here is the same natural piety which we find in the poem about the rainbow. This human institution serves to bind the days of its members each to each.

Indeed, in such words as these of Burke's, which plainly have to do with an ideal society rather than a particular political order, it is hard to say that the word 'church' would not be as appropriate as the word 'state.' For what Burke says of the state may be said with equal truth of the church; it is such an institution and operates upon men in that way.

It will be replied at once that any such conception of the church is very 'low' and naturalistic, and gives away the whole case for the church as the peculiar vehicle of divine revelation and supernatural grace. We need candor and courage at this point. All religious persons, with the exception of avowed humanists, believe that God is seeking to reveal himself to man. Many religious persons firmly believe that clear intimations of this revelation may be had from nature, through single saintly men, and perhaps from the course of history. They would concede that this revelation is in part mediated through the church, but would not confine it to the church.

They would go farther and express their faith in the general fact of grace — that is, 'help from above' or help from outside oneself, at its best a help which seems to be more than human in its source. They do not deny that what is traditionally called 'supernatural grace' may be mediated by a church. On the other hand no Christian church has ever seriously defended any magical theory of the operation of grace. All churches require that the would-be communicant who seeks this grace should be sincere and should come with good conscience. Many churches would add that the minister who gives this help should also be himself a fit vehicle for the transmission of grace. Certainly a bad conscience on the part of the worshipper or the minister must frustrate in some very real measure the workings of this help from God.

Furthermore the common experience of the most saintly per-



sons forbids our restricting the workings of this help of God to the concerns of churches. There is an arbitrary immediacy about the experiences of the saint, as in the life of the artist, which prevents our institutionalizing the access of help from the not-ourselves.

If the truth be told, we do not often, or even habitually, have a 'religious experience' when we go to church. We reserve that austere phrase for inward events that cannot be commanded by calendar or clock, though they may at times synchronize with seasons when religion is formally present in our minds. But what we do always get at church, if we understand the transaction, is an access of 'natural piety,' in the terms of Burke's statement of Wordsworth's principle.

A church, to paraphrase Burke, is indeed a contract. But it is something more than a contract entered into for the sake of prosecuting certain necessary social reforms, or realizing certain immediate and common profits from the assurance of moral like-mindedness. A church is a partnership involving many generations. Each particular denomination is a clause in the contract of eternal society connecting the visible and invisible worlds, and as such is not to be dissolved lightly. So construed, the normal office of worship with which we are familiar serves to bind our days each to each, to assure us constantly of that unity and coherence of life which in want of its witness we must sometimes doubt in theory and deny in practice.

A church that has allowed its people to drift into the temper in which, individually, they greet Sunday with the question, 'Shall I go to church today?' must be failing culturally in its presentation of religion. Its themes and orders must be too occasional to serve the purposes of natural piety. Every considerable church will command from its members a desire 'to support the institution' — a conviction that the thing is worth keeping alive. But if this conviction be pressed to its conclusion, we must infer that, unconsciously if not consciously, that desire to support the institution has its origins equally in the support which in turn the institution gives to those who belong to it.

This world being what it is, there is no other scene or transaction which serves the religious man so adequately in binding his

days each to each as the offices of a church. Here his own 'private struggle to unify life morally and to give it continuity, as a spiritual history, receives confirmation. In the presence of its constant and utterly familiar affirmations as to the concerns of the human soul, he knows himself to be spiritually a single man. For the purposes of daily living this natural piety is a necessary part of religion. It does not exclude what the elder theology called the grace of God, it leaves room for that grace as we can identify it and as we may experience it, but natural piety provides for the days when the word of the Lord is precious and there is no open vision.

Wordsworth needed the Lake Country to reassure him at a point where perplexity and doubt threatened to disintegrate his life. Only that scenery could restore to him the assurance of the inviolate integrity of his own life and its uninterrupted continuity, whatever the strange vassitude. The religious man needs a church for the same reason. The germs of irreligion are always in the human system, as the peril of a divided or shattered life. Reassurance, in the terms of religion and in the area with which religion is concerned, comes from the one human institution whose business it is to confirm men at this point.

All debated dogma, all intellectual uncertainty to one side, a noble service of worship has an extraordinary power to simplify and unify life. The skepticism as to our own central integrity, the felt menace of schism in the self, these are continually dispelled by the maturing awareness of days bound each to each by a natural piety.

Without prejudice to any other doctrines of revelation and grace, this is the permanent cultural truth of the relation of churches to the private religious lives of individuals. These individuals 'support the institution,' but in turn the institution supports them at the point where reassurance is constantly necessary for that unity of life which is one of the constant aims of all religion.

I am quite aware that all this is very 'low-church' doctrine so far as traditional Catholicism is concerned. But — and this is immediately more to the point — I am equally aware that from the standpoint of much liberal Protestantism it is 'high-

church' doctrine. The modern liberal theory of the church bears to the general ideas here intimated much the same relation which the account of the state as merely a social contract bears to Burke's bolder and more adequate understanding of the fact. Only some such 'high-church' theory of its own place and work in history can assure organized Protestantism of its permanence. Such a theory is not incompatible with those changes in faith and practice which are required in a world where more light is constantly breaking upon men. But it would substitute for ecclesiastical opportunism a noble cultural sobriety in the conduct of the worship and work of a church. We are living at a time when many forces conspire to disintegrate our lives. We need and we respond to those human ways of realizing religion which bind our days each to each, whether within the limits of a single life or in the succession of the generations.

Meanwhile a church so construed rids itself of the dilemma which every historic church has thus far created for itself in the contradiction of a primitive faith which is in theory final and sufficient, yet which requires in practice constant re-interpretation. The Roman Church has come the nearest to a working solution of this contradiction in terms, yet its solution is in many ways the least logical because it is the most ambiguous. The fundamentalist Protestant is more logical in affirming the sufficiency of his Bible, to the detriment of the interpreter; the Quaker is more candid in subjecting his Bible to the witness of the Inner Light. Yet the one is bound too much to the past, the other is over-apt to neglect the past. Religion can be neither immediacy nor archaeology. It must compound the two in some living way.

Only a courage which is willing to part company with the dream of Catholicism for the sake of a genuinely organic account of the history of religion, particularly in its institutional forms, can ever give us a theory of the church upon which we may safely build. The contracts of moral self-interest as a present social expedient do not suffice. The contract of the generations is in these matters necessary. But this contract is that of an interlocked succession of life, in which there is an actual increment of truth, rather than adroit restatement. This



is not a contract between the primitive depositors and their ecclesiastical bookkeepers, not a contract between an Apostle and a Bishop, an Evangelist and a Teacher. It is a contract between men each of whom in his own time lived his own life freely, yet who recognize between the generations a continuity and coherence of experience which may not be denied, and which makes the process one, whatever its turnings.

When Ranke said that history is "the study of how things came to be as they are," he conceded its valid sequences and inner logic. A church is a witness of how things came to be as they are in modern Christendom, yet it is more than a chronicle, it is an intimation of this communal life of the Spirit, in which there has been constantly an access of truth, wrongly identified hitherto as a mere 'interpretation' of a final revelation. Only by getting rid of the incubus of the historic dogma of the original and the copy, the faith once delivered and then re-interpreted, can we arrive at an account of the church culturally credible and religiously serviceable to all sorts and conditions of men. It would seem that the church, so construed, should make an appeal as strong as that implied in the historic claims to an impossible Catholicism.

# TOWARD A VALID VIEW OF GOD

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## I

LIBERAL Christians have affirmed their faith in religious certainty on the strength of two basic claims: namely, that Jesus revealed the character of God — a morally good God; and that Jesus revealed God's purpose for the world — a morally perfect humanity in accord with God's own character. The outlook of liberal Christianity, embracing both its theology and its ethical program, centres in its certainty concerning these two doctrines which form its sources.

But current inquiries are raising the question: Can the character of God be ascertained merely by learning the character of Jesus? Which is the theological way of saying: Can the character of cosmic reality be deciphered in terms of personality? Certain modern writers are replying to this challenge with a single, characteristic assertion: 'Jesus is the highest we know, therefore we must interpret God in terms of Christ.' The following are typical expressions of this apologetics:

Our faith in the Christian God rests ultimately upon the appeal which Christ makes to that which is highest in us, together with the conviction that it is rational to interpret the universe by the highest we know.<sup>1</sup>

I think of God as Christlike. . . . How can I prove this? I can't prove it. I arrive at the thought of a Christlike God by putting the best possible construction on the universe. . . . I mean by putting the best construction on the universe, the belief that right and truth and beauty are the very stuff of which the universe consists, and that those are expressions of a Christlike God. Whatever in the universe makes against such belief I put to one side as something not yet understood.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> William Adams Brown, *Christian Theology in Outline*, p. 137.

<sup>2</sup> Francis J. McConnell, 'The Eternal Spirit,' in *My Idea of God* (Newton), pp. 258 f.

The typical Christian liberal . . . makes his discovery of God in Christ more a matter of spiritual insight than of systematized formula. Many of us have found at least a temporary refuge in this attitude. The deepest question which man's mind asks and man's life at its very center depends upon, What is the truth about God? has been answered for us in Christ. He is the best we know and we will not interpret God in terms less than that.<sup>3</sup>

These are religious utterances, rather than philosophical or scientific observations. They mean to express the writers' confidence that the universe is being sustained and controlled by Someone who is morally as good and trustworthy as Jesus. They are the religious outreach of the human to assure himself that he has a place in the cosmos, and that the universe is friendly toward man. And more than that, that there is 'a Friend behind phenomena.' Thus the assertion that 'Jesus reveals God' is the projection of a human hope, poetically expressed in personal terms. God is a *person* with the kind of character that Jesus disclosed.

Now the difficulty arises when one presses this imagery to assume logical form. Deductions are then made from the analogy that presume a content and an objective reference which, in the nature of the case, overstate the truth of the matter. Poetry is the expressed response to some objective thing: a tree, a cloud, or a child. And the poem relates genuinely to an objective reality. But logical inferences deduced from the poet's aesthetic impression of the tree, the cloud, or the child would certainly not give a true analysis of any one of the realities. The religious and the poetic response to reality are similar in character: they apprehend and depict a truth in reality that is certainly genuine. But the truth apprehended through a religious outreach finds its best, perhaps most religious, expression in poetic symbols. So expressed, however, it does not yield to logical deduction or to scientific analysis. And when such is attempted, the poetic vision is missed, and in its place is constructed an artificial concept which misleads the interpreter. That does not mean that the truth apprehended through a religious outreach does not yield to logical elaboration or to scientific analysis. That would be to say that it has no em-

<sup>3</sup> Harry Emerson Fosdick, *Modern Use of the Bible*, pp. 187-188.

pirical objectivity. The religious response most certainly does have objectivity when it is genuine. But in order to apply the methods of logic and science to the truth thus attained the insight must first be expressed in the terms of logic and of science. To illustrate our point, let us say that the religious man in his outreach toward the universe apprehends there a responsiveness to his own being — partly a projection of his subjective hope and partly the result of objective experience — which, in his religious way, he addresses as 'Father.' Now if, as in the case of certain Christian interpretations, this religious symbol 'Father' is elaborated in terms that claim the character of logical deduction or of scientific observation, the conclusions turn out to be a perplexing mixture of truth and error. For it is not in the symbol, but in the experience of responsiveness, that the empirical qualities must be discerned.

Yet the position of liberal Christianity concerning God cannot be dismissed as mythical, the result of confusing symbol with empirical fact. The validity of its claims must be recognized; and the fallacies in its assumptions must be more clearly discerned.

## II

The christocentric conviction that 'Jesus revealed God' has usually assumed one of three interpretations: One interpretation reads that Jesus *reflected a quality* in his life which has convinced men ever since that reality, whatever else it is, embraces that quality. The cosmic curtain was pulled aside for a moment in history, and revealed to the world a glimpse of the quality of reality. This mode of thinking has behind it the Greek pattern of reality in terms of substance or essence. God is conceived as having incarnated himself in human life, and as having thereby disclosed to humanity the fundamental character of his being. The christocentric interpretation of this phenomenon, in contrast to that of traditional theology, has accentuated the practical rather than the metaphysical aspect, and thereby has translated the revealed quality into terms of moral character instead of metaphysical substance. Yet the



imagery remains the same: Jesus 'mirrors' God, or Jesus 'reflects' God.

This christocentric interpretation generally avoided being involved in metaphysical difficulties at this point by insisting that man is incapable of comprehending the whole truth of this phenomenon. All he could know explicitly was what Jesus *expressed* of God.<sup>4</sup> Consequently it confined its interpretation of Jesus to his 'moral character.' In his quality of life and character, it was believed, Jesus reflected an aspect of reality which convinced man that moral character was fundamental and ultimate.

A second interpretation is that Jesus apprehended something in his outreach toward the universe which evoked from him confidence and trust in its spiritual reality. Now there is very definite religious help to be had here, provided one concerns himself with the outreach toward the universe, and extends the experiment which Jesus, and may we say others, have ventured, without being too ready to transform into dogmas the specific findings which Jesus is believed to have made. That Jesus did attain insight in his experience with reality that environed him is not to be denied. And in so far as his insight seems tenable and suggestive of further insight, modern men may be impelled to follow the gleam. For, as some believe, we are still testing the insights of Jesus, and not all the evidence is yet in.<sup>5</sup> But the equally important concern is that men extend that outreach toward reality to plumb the depths further, and thus enrich themselves with even more intimate and adequate experiences of God.

The more common interpretation, however, among christocentric thinkers is that Jesus consciously communicated with and represented a Personality in the universe whom he called Father. Originally this was the Jewish way of thinking about God, and according to historical scholarship it was the way in which Jesus thought of God. Christocentric theologians, in appropriating this interpretation, have proceeded to construct

<sup>4</sup> See Horace Bushnell, *God in Christ*, and W. N. Clarke, *An Outline of Christian Theology*.

<sup>5</sup> H. N. Wieman, *The Wrestle of Religion with Truth*.

the character of God in terms of an ideal Father, or at least of an ideal personal character. It has been assumed that God must be at least as good as Jesus, "otherwise Jesus would be higher and more divine than God, himself."<sup>6</sup>

Apart from the fallacy that we have already considered here, as well as the questions that may arise from historical criticism as to the character of Jesus, there appears the philosophical inquiry, how far, and in what sense, may one interpret cosmic reality in terms of personality? Christocentric theologians have conceived the matter in terms of a dualism, and accordingly have viewed personality as a mystical entity, somehow related both to the human and the divine. Usually it has been insisted that persons are more akin to the divine than to the natural order. Hence it was an easy next step to assume that reality was the supreme, all-embracing Personality which gave ultimate meaning and worth to single, finite personalities. Philosophically, therefore, this interpretation rested upon the assumption that personality is the ultimate form or representation of spiritual reality.<sup>7</sup>

It is this assumption that needs to be scrutinized. The term 'personality' is ambiguous, for like the terms 'soul' and 'mind' it has come to be interpreted differently in present-day thinking. In contrast to the traditional conception of personality as a mystical entity, combining the human and the divine, recent and more objective studies of man's conscious processes have led to the definition of personality in terms of a total synthesis of behaviors of an organism. Viewed in its restricted sense, personality is an achievement of cosmic growth at the human level; and seen in its wider reaches, it is part and parcel of a development which has been occurring among organisms throughout the evolution of psycho-physical elements of organic life. Personality is one of the resultants. It has, as we have said, appeared at the human level. Careful observation of other organ-

<sup>6</sup> Sherwood Eddy, *Facing the Crisis*, p. 63.

<sup>7</sup> Christocentric theologians did not, however, argue this point metaphysically. They assumed it a priori in accordance with traditional Christian thinking. This position is defended in the philosophy of Personalism, which has proved to be particularly congenial to Christian suppositions. See B. P. Bowne, *Personalism*; E. S. Brightman, *Religious Values*; A. C. Knudson, *The Philosophy of Personalism*.

isms discloses innumerable other varieties of behaviors and syntheses of behaviors, also resultants of this psycho-physical evolution at other organic levels. So viewed, it seems incredible that one should contend for ultimate or absolute significance of personality, unless by such significance one means to imply that personality is to be included in one's estimate of total reality. So also must all behaviors at all organic levels be included. But that is quite different from saying that God is personality, or that he is a Personality, for that would be to say that God behaves like human beings. Can there be any more justification for contending that God behaves like the human organism than that he behaves like any other organism at any other level? If we view personality in its restricted sense as a synthesis of organic behaviors achieved at the human level, the tendency to read the kind of absolute significance into personality which is assumed by personalistic interpretations of spiritual reality appears to be the result of an extreme anthropocentric prejudice.

Some interpreters have designated personality the highest culmination of a total organic tendency in the universe, and have thereby opened the way for suggesting that personality may truly describe the behavior of God.<sup>8</sup> By this is meant, no doubt, that that behavior which if known would be described as God, must include those characteristics of personality termed conscious awareness, intelligence, and perhaps much more. But at least these! The description would be even more enriched if one were to add 'interested awareness.' Yet plausible as this may appear, one is impelled to regard this movement of thought as an unwarranted leap to a happy hypothesis. The very assumption, in fact, that there is a single organic tendency at work in the universe which may be designated God, seems an over-simplification of the facts. The concern to reduce all spiritual reality to a Oneness,<sup>9</sup> and to define this ultimate in terms of a single tendency or behavior, may of itself be mis-

<sup>8</sup> Smuts, *Holism and Evolution*, Chapter X.

<sup>9</sup> For example, Smuts's "tendency toward whole-making"; Alexander's and Morgan's "nisis" (tendency toward deity); Whitehead's "principle of concretion" (tendency toward individualization).

leading. Is it not true that when viewed analytically, as must be the case in the scientific approach, that objective reality upon which we are dependent, and which sustains and enriches life for us, appears to consist of a *community* of behaviors? However significant the tendency toward whole-making may be, is it not true that, in this process which sustains us and evolves us, tendencies toward *whole-breaking* are also, perhaps equally, significant? The life-process, both in its physical and psychical aspects, so long as it continues, is an incessant interaction between many organic behaviors, widening out into distant reaches of associated behaviors, which we call environment. And while it is true that the more selective it becomes in its interactions, the richer that life-process may become, at the same time it is also true that it will thereby become more inclusive in its grasp. But neither inclusiveness nor selectiveness in interaction necessarily leads to *singleness* in that upon which man is ultimately dependent. The richest reality may be not the One, but the Many.

To be sure, in the hour of worship the worshipping mind will synthesize that multiplicity into an experienced Oneness, for it is the nature of the religious mood to catch up the many into a visualized Object of worship. But that describes the method of religious worship, not the condition of empirical phenomena. It is the worshipper who unifies the many to visualize the abundance of life's fullness in its totality; but a visualized totality need not imply a metaphysically eternal unity with a large-lettered Unifier. As Ames has suggestively pointed out, "the search for God as one definite object or observable fact somewhere within the known world of phenomena has been fruitless."<sup>10</sup> What has happened in the search for the 'soul' and the 'mind' has taken place with reference to the conception of God.

Instead of trying to locate God as an object in space the search is made in the nature of the life of the world including man and the human cultures which the world sustains. Here again the conventional habit is to envisage the world as a physical substance and to seek God as an object outside or inside of this material universe, just as men have taken the bodily organism

<sup>10</sup> E. S. Ames, *Religion*, p. 149.



as a physical or material thing and the mind as an object alongside or inside of it. But it is possible that a more fruitful course is to inquire whether God may not be more truly and more fully understood as the reality of the world in certain aspects and functions — in what is here characterized as reality idealized.<sup>11</sup>

Now when God is conceived in this manner, the difficulties that were encountered in ascribing to him the characteristics of personality are vastly lessened. It then appears that we have hardly dealt with the matter adequately when we have merely said that God is not a personality. For in saying that, we are uttering a half-truth, the other half of which is that personal life, however inadequate and partial, *is* included in whatever reality does describe God. As Ames has so pointedly said:

In the same way and with the same cogency we may say that reality is personal, as we have said reality is orderly and intelligent and possessed of good will or love. Not all of reality is personal, any more than it is orderly, but there is personality in it. Since man is a part of nature, nature is to that extent personal. There seems, consequently, the same ground for asserting that God is personal as we have had for saying that God is order, intelligence, and love. Everything depends on the empirical fact as to whether man is a part of nature. Our position is that he is, and not merely in his physical being, but also in mind and personality. . . . If it is granted that all that man develops and achieves belongs to the nature within which he exists, then nature has the qualities which man has. Either the characteristics must be denied to him or they must be held to be a part of that nature to which he belongs . . . since man is possessed of personality, the reality which we call nature, or the world, is to that extent personal. Therefore, God conceived as reality is so far personal.<sup>12</sup>

### III

As a corollary to its view of God, the christocentric interpretation has pointed out that Jesus disclosed God's purpose for the world. This postulate followed naturally in accord with the assumption that God was a personal being in whom moral character was paramount. It further followed, therefore, that the divine end of the world was to produce a world of personalities whose moral character should accord with God's char-

<sup>11</sup> Ames, p. 151.

<sup>12</sup> Ames, pp. 164-165. This position calls to mind Shailer Mathews's characteristic assertion that "there must be that which is personal in a process that has produced personality."

acter. This point of view has its classic statement in the words of William Newton Clarke:

A spirit who could give existence to such a universe could not do it without an all-comprehending purpose. The order, unity, and uniformity of method that pervade the existing universe attest the presence of such purpose. *There certainly must be "one far-off divine event to which the whole creation moves," — one great result and outcome of the universal existence, for the sake of which all was brought into being.* In such a purpose must be included innumerable subordinate and contributing purposes, which, one after another, serve their term and develop into purposes that follow, all ministering to the final end.

*Since God is a Spirit this final end must be spiritual.* The material enfolding and unfolding, rising and falling, flux and reflux, in which the universe fulfills its course, cannot be enough to command the deepest interest of God, the Spirit. The lower forms of life cannot suffice him, nor can mere intellectual operation satisfy him. The universe contains spiritual beings innumerable, of whom men are the part known to us; and this part of existence, being directly akin to God, is the dominant and characteristic part, in which the significance of the entire system must be found. *Since the lower serves the higher the universe must exist for the spirits that it contains, and for the highest that is in them, and the "one far-off divine event" must be spiritual.* In the goodness of God we find an additional assurance of this; for a good Creator will surely take interest chiefly in the highest nature and destiny of his creatures, and these are spiritual. The Highest cares for the highest.

The final cause of existence is the overwhelming mystery; nothing but the Christian light illumines it. In Christ we learn that God of all is perfect in goodness, and in Christ we see him working upon created spirits for their good. In the Christian light, therefore, we safely affirm that *the purpose of God in creating and conducting the universe is first to produce free spirits capable of goodness like his own, and then to bring them into his own moral likeness and fellowship.* This, which is the only spiritual end that we can imagine the good God to entertain, is the end that Christ shows him to be pursuing.<sup>13</sup>

It is not our concern here to indulge in a mere battle of words; yet certain assumptions that are made basic in this statement, and which obtain generally in the christocentric view, should be noted. Clarke ascertains the divine end of the world by a process of logical deduction from three fundamental christocentric suppositions: first, that the natural order is subservient to the highest end of man, for the reason that logically the lower serves the higher; secondly, that the highest end of man, he being akin to God, is to attain God's quality of character;

<sup>13</sup> W. N. Clarke, *An Outline of Christian Theology*, pp. 135 f. The italics are mine.

thirdly, that the quality of God's character, as revealed by Jesus, is moral goodness.

That the natural order is subservient to the highest end of man is an assumption that could hardly be maintained in the light of our present knowledge of the world of nature. To quote, for example, the statement of the matter by one man of science:

The evolution doctrine does not teach that man is the goal of all evolutionary process, but that man is merely the present end of one particular series of evolutionary changes. The goal of evolution in general is perfection of adaptation to the conditions of life as they happen to be at any particular time. Many a highly perfected creature has reached the goal of its evolutionary course only to perish because it was too highly perfected for a particular environment and could not withstand the hardships incident to radically changed world conditions.\* Many evolutions therefore have been completed, while others are still awaiting the opportunity to speed up toward a new goal.<sup>14</sup>

Christocentric theology apparently has taken practically no account of the genuine character of the natural world. It has been content to interpret it theologically irrespective of empirical descriptions of its life; consequently its expositions at this point disclose the same artificial procedure that is met with in traditional theologies.

The assumption that the highest end of man is to attain God's character, defining God as is here done, likewise involves difficulties. To deal directly with the christocentric view, this postulate rests upon the assumption that man is akin to a supernaturally defined God, meaning that man's essential nature is supernaturally spiritual like that of God's, in contrast to man's physical body. This is a dualism which has been insisted upon in all theological systems where the supernatural and natural realms have been sharply contrasted. As has been pointed out, modern scientific interpretations are insisting, on the contrary, that man's whole organism has had its origin in the natural process, and that it is within that natural order that his life is to find fulfilment.

The assumption that man's end is to behave like God seems incongruous, when viewed in the light of modern philosophical

<sup>14</sup> H. H. Newman, *Readings in Evolution, Genetics and Eugenics*, pp. 8 f.

interpretations which seek to define God in terms of cosmic behavior. This incongruity arises of course because the two interpretations of God and the two conceptions of personality are at variance. The organic view regards God as a particular behavior in the universe, having its own characteristics and functions;<sup>15</sup> man, or human personality, on the other hand, is conceived of as another type of behavior, having its own singular characteristics. Consequently, from this standpoint, to assume that man approximates God's characteristics is to become involved in gross confusion.

Yet the christocentric claim concerning world purpose cannot be wholly dispensed with. To say that the world in all its ultimate proportions is intended for, and in fact is tending toward, the ideal of moral character which was revealed by Jesus, is indeed a daring hypothesis. And the manner in which christocentric theologians have attempted to substantiate this claim has served largely to discredit the claim itself. Its implied supernaturalism; its appeal to revelation; its artificial projection of personality into cosmic dimensions, have all helped to involve its utterances in the language of a formal logic, the force of which suffered because of its pretentious premises. But there is insight to be retained here.

If, for example, with Ames, God is conceived as "idealized reality," there is considerable truth in the assertion that the highest end of man is to attain God's character. But we need to be aware of what the assertion means, when made from the side of that conception. It does not mean that that end has been established in a priori fashion by supernatural circumstances, and that revelation has made it known to men's minds. This dualistic imagery has no place in the point of view we are now presenting. Without this supernatural imagery, to be sure, Ames's statement, in contrast to the christocentric assertion, seems much less pretentious — as it is. Yet it is potent with the same quality of expectancy for the future. It should be noted, of course, that Ames concerns himself, not with

<sup>15</sup> See, as examples of this interpretation, C. L. Morgan, *Emergent Evolution*; and, by the same author, *Mind, Life and Spirit*; Smuts, *Holism and Evolution*; H. N. Wieman, *The Wrestle of Religion with Truth*, Chaps. XI, XII, and XIII.



prophecy as to the 'divine end,' but with interpretation of the present expressions of cosmic life. What he means to insist upon in his interpretation is that personal life be included as a genuine expression of that cosmic life. Thus, when he says that "reality is characterized by love," he means that "love is present in the world and in life." And when he says that reality is characterized by intelligence and rationality, he means that intelligence and rationality are in life, that they are just as truly manifestations of the world's life as are the more physical properties measured and interpreted by instruments of science.

Now "God," says Ames, "is the world of life taken in certain of its aspects, in those aspects which are consonant with order, beauty, and expansion." We need not labor the point that Ames is not speaking here of a metaphysical factor or behavior in the universe, but of a portion of its life — idealized.

To say now, in this sense, that man's objective is to attain the character of God is a meaningful claim. It means that he is to approximate in his own struggling and aspiring life-span a measure of that selective portion of the world's life, which, idealized, is God. It means that, beyond all his other accomplishments, he aspires to integrate himself, as an organism in the cosmos, with those aspects of the total order which are manifested in intelligence, rationality, and love. To the extent, then, that men, individually and corporately, do shape their destinies in accord with that "idealized reality," and thus increase that portion of life which is "consonant with order, beauty, and expansion," they do, in the language of religion, approximate the 'divine end.'

## THE APOCALYPSE OF PAUL AND THE 'IRANISCHE ERLÖSUNGSMYSTERIUM'

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AMONG New Testament apocrypha few have been more consistently neglected by modern scholarship than the so-called Apocalypse of Paul. This represents a strange reversal in the fortunes of the book, since at one time it ruled an almost universal favorite. Diverse tokens of this its original popularity still exist. The first will be found in the multiplicity of its ancient versions, manuscripts of which have been coming to light with some regularity since the eighteenth century, when Assemani indicated the existence of Syriac and Arabic codices in the Vatican Library.<sup>1</sup> A Greek form was discovered by Tischendorf in 1843 at Milan. Its text, however, collated with that of another manuscript at Munich, was not published till 1866,<sup>2</sup> thus permitting the Syriac version, as represented by two codices from Urumiah translated by Justin Perkins, to be the first to appear in printed form.<sup>3</sup> Subsequently one complete manuscript of a Latin version and a fragment of another were discovered, the former being edited by M. R. James in 1893.<sup>4</sup> In

<sup>1</sup> *Bibliotheca Orientalis Clementino-Vaticana*, III. 1, De Scr. Syr. Nestorianis, Rome, 1725, p. 282, no. 9.

<sup>2</sup> *Apocalypses Apocryphae*, Leipzig, 1866, pp. 34-69.

<sup>3</sup> *JAOS*, vol. VIII, 1866, pp. 183-212. Additional Syriac mss. have come to light since Assemani and Perkins. Cf. A. Baumstark, *Geschichte der syrischen Literatur*, Bonn, 1922, p. 70 and n. 8. Baumstark fails to list the mss. preserved in the library of the American Oriental Society at New Haven from which Perkins worked. Zingerle has published a German translation of the Syriac from Cod. Vat. Syr. 180 in *Heidenheim's Vierteljahrsschrift für deutsch- und englisch-theologische Forschung und Kritik*, vol. IV, 1871, pp. 139-183.

<sup>4</sup> *Texts and Studies*, II, 3, *Apocrypha Anecdota*, Cambridge, 1893, pp. 1-42. The fragment on fol. 7a-8b of Cod. 362 in the Nationalbibliothek at Vienna was recognized as representing this version by E. Wieber, *De apocalypsis S. Pauli codicibus*, 1904, pp. 24-34. Two additional Latin mss. are referred to by E. v. Dobschütz, *Texte u. Untersuchungen*, XXXVIII. 4, *Das Decretum Gelasianum*, 1912, p. 302, n. 1.

1904 the Mechitarist fathers published from mss. of the San Lazzaro library the text of an Armenian version in four recensions,<sup>5</sup> while Budge, in 1915, edited and translated a slightly mutilated manuscript of the Coptic version.<sup>6</sup> Finally James, in connection with his recent English rendering of the Latin version, mentions the existence of an Ethiopic translation.<sup>7</sup>

These versions must all of them have been in existence before the later Middle Ages. They testify therefore to the popularity of the Apocalypse of Paul in the earlier periods of Christian history. But evidence of another sort indicates that in the later centuries, particularly from the thirteenth to the fifteenth, the document continued to be in vogue. This evidence is to be found in the popularized and frequently versified forms in which portions of the original document were current. The texts, gathered by Brandes,<sup>8</sup> indicated to him the existence in the Middle Ages of six Latin, four French, one Danish, five English, and three German recensions.<sup>9</sup> Indeed it seems quite probable that Dante's remark about Aeneas and Paul as men who had traversed the other world may have been inspired by a knowledge of the Apocalypse rather than by 2 Cor. 12, 2, since the former contains a full account of the apostle's visit to the underworld.<sup>10</sup>

The modern neglect of the Apocalypse of Paul, which thus stands in complete contrast to its ancient popularity, may be explained by the lack both of an accredited critical text and of such materials of comparison as would make its contents intelligible and establish for it a definite place in the development of Christian apocalyptic thought. Though no one has previously taken cognizance of the fact, the latter of these wants has been supplied, at least in part, by the publication of the

<sup>5</sup> Bibliographical data on the Armenian texts are not accessible at New Haven. The different recensions are translated into German and discussed by P. Vetter, *Theologische Quartalschrift*, vol. LXXXVIII, 1906, pp. 568-595, vol. LXXXIX, 1907, pp. 58-75.

<sup>6</sup> *Miscellaneous Coptic Texts*, 1915; text, pp. 534-574, translation, pp. 1043-1084.

<sup>7</sup> *The Apocryphal New Testament*, 1924, p. 525.

<sup>8</sup> *Visio S. Pauli*, 1885.

<sup>9</sup> Additional remarks about Slavonic texts will be found in Harnack, *Geschichte der altchr. Lit.*, I, 2, 1893, pp. 910-911. It is not evident from these remarks whether the texts referred to represent the original Apocalypse or its later epitomes.

<sup>10</sup> *Inferno*, ii. 32; cf. K. Vossler, *Die göttliche Komödie*, 1907, pp. 756 ff.

Manichæan and the Mandæan texts, and by the discussions centring around Reitzenstein's famous thesis of the 'Iranische Erlösungsmysterium.' The present discussion endeavors to illumine by reference to these texts and to the theories of Reitzenstein one particular section of the Apocalypse of Paul, namely that dealing with the fate of the righteous and wicked souls in the period immediately after the death of the body and before the moment of their entrance into eternal bliss or punishment, and to draw from the comparison such conclusions as appear to follow regarding the provenience and dating of the document. The critical edition, which, by reason of the fact that the text was never closely guarded, will not be easy to construct, still remains a desideratum. Its absence makes it necessary to quote the document from some one version, any significant variants of other versions being mentioned in the foot-notes. The legitimacy of the choice here of the Syriac form, as known from the older of the two mss. in the library of the American Oriental Society at New Haven and embodied in the translation of Perkins, will appear from the following pages. This choice is not intended to imply a Syriac original. It does imply that the Greek form preserved is severely abridged and that the Syriac and Latin, when cautiously compared, will often give a better impression of the original than the existing Greek, the Armenian and Coptic assisting now and then to certify to the wording of the Syriac and the Greek respectively.

## I

In its Syriac form the Apocalypse of Paul opens with a formula borrowed, it would seem, from the Old Testament, in which the word of the Lord comes to the apostle saying, "Son of man, go speak to the people of the land: How long will ye sin?" This is followed by a series of complaints made to the Lord by sun, moon, seas, rivers, and earth concerning the sinfulness of the world, and by their requests that they be allowed to destroy mankind. The voice of God replies by insisting that man be given full opportunity for repentance. Thereupon one of the angels appears to Paul, bidding him follow him



into the world beyond to behold what blessings and punishments accrue to the faithful and the evil respectively. The purpose of the invitation is of course to enable him the better to preach repentance to a wicked world. Paul does not have to wait until after his actual arrival in heaven to see things marvellous to relate, and all that is concerned in our particular discussion is beheld from a vantage-point above the earth but below the actual firmament.

What first attracts the apostle's attention in the lowest of the heavenly spheres is the sight of the evil principalities and powers of the stellar zone. Interpreted as responsible for the evils obtaining upon earth, they belong to the normal machinery of ancient religious reflection and require no further comment. In their vicinity, however, he finds two particular groups of angels whose appearance and function will require some discussion. The first of the groups is described in the following terms:

And I saw there angels in whom there is no mercy, and their faces were full of wrath; every tooth they had protruded from their mouths; and their eyes sparkled like lightning; and the hair of their heads was thick and strong; and as it were a flame of fire proceeded from their mouths.<sup>11</sup>

G (Greek, quoted from Tischendorf) abbreviates severely, incorrectly identifying these angels with certain principalities previously mentioned in S (Syriac, quoted from Perkins's translation, with the AOS manuscripts compared). L (Latin, quoted from the edition of James) is marred by misreadings. C (Coptic, quoted from Budge) lacks the opening pages. A (the first recension of the Armenian, quoted from Vetter's translation) gives excellent support to S.

*There:* A adds *furchtbare*; *in whom there is no mercy:* L adds *nullam habentes pietatem*, A adds *bei denen sich nicht wohnen lässt*; *every tooth . . . protruded from their mouths:* G omits; *their eyes sparkled like lightning:* G omits, L reading *oculi fulgebant ut stella matutina orientis*, due probably to a confusion of *ἀστραπή* and *ἄστρον*, and indicating that the original Greek text contained a reference to the eyes. *A wie Kupfer* is due to a rendering of S *bar̄ka* in terms of the meaning of the root *bʿrak*; *the hair of their head was thick and strong:* A überlang, G L omit. It is probable, however, that the Greek prototype of L contained a reference to the hair, because L speaks of the fire, which in S issues from the mouth of the angels, as proceeding de

<sup>11</sup> JAOS, VIII, pp. 190-191.

capillis capitis eorum . . . sive de ore eorum; *a flame of fire*: the reading of L scintille may be due to a confusion of φλόγα and φεψάλυγα; *from their mouths*: G adds καὶ πυρίνην ἐσθῆτα ἡμφιεσμένους, which, though it is not found in S L A, may none the less be original, since garments are mentioned in the description of the second group of angels by S L A.

The second group is described as follows:

And again I saw above, on high, other angels, whose faces shone like the sun, and they had bound their loins with girdles, in the likeness of gold and pearls; and they held in their hands crowns and the seal of God was upon them (?); and they were clothed with garments, and the name of the living God was stamped upon them; and they were united in humility and love.<sup>12</sup>

*And again I saw above on high*: better, with G L, and I looked on high and saw; *loins*: G omits; *and pearls*: omit with G L A; *and the seal of God was upon them*: similarly G's paraphrase ἐν οἷς ἦν τὸ ὄνομα κυρίου ἐγγεγραμμένον. G and S seem to be thinking of inscribed 'golden crowns.' The reading of L abentes palmas in manibus eorum et signum dei, and of A Kronen und das Zeichen Gottes, make the seal a separate entity. Since the usual 'crown of victory' even in religious literature is a wreath, or garland (cf. Odes of Solomon, 20, 7, Mand. Liturgien, pp. 29-30, and Reitzenstein, Hellenistische Mysterienreligionen, 3d ed., Leipzig, 1927, pp. 43-45), and since the paraphrase of G can be explained as being due to a confusion of the wreath with the clothes, which do have the name 'stamped upon them,' the text of L A appears to deserve preference; *garments*: A, adding leuchtende, alone furnishes the necessary modifier λαμπραὶ to contrast with the πυρίνη of G in the previous passage; *of the living God*: probably better with L A filii dei, though G reads κυρίου; *united in*: better πεπληρωμένους as given in G and presupposed in L A.

The significance of the first of these two groups of angels is explained in the Syriac as follows:

These are angels in whom there is no mercy, who are sent after the souls of sinners and the wicked, after those who had not repentance before they departed out of the world; who did not believe our God nor wait for his salvation, that there might be unto them a helper.<sup>13</sup>

A paraphrases, merely speaking of these angels as the powers which cast sinners into Hell. *Angels in whom there is no mercy*: omit with G L; *sinners and the wicked*: G L omit *and the wicked*, adding ἐν τῇ ὥρᾳ τῆς ἀνάγκης,

<sup>12</sup> JAOS, VIII, p. 191.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid.

which may be original and is certainly the sense of S; *our God . . . a helper*: G paraphrases ὅτι κρίσις ἐστὶν καὶ ἀνταπόδοσις, while L, not having a knowledge of the technical use of 'helper,' inverts the elements of the sentence and renders dominum habere se adiutorem nec speraverunt in eum.

The significance of the second group is explained by the Syriac in the words:

These are the angels of righteousness, who are sent after the souls of the righteous.<sup>14</sup>

*The angels of righteousness*: G A omit; *sent after*: A fortführen; *righteous*: L adds in ora necessitatis, a reading which G presupposes, though incorrectly paraphrasing ἐν τῇ ἡμέρᾳ τῆς ἀναστάσεως.

For the explanation of a belief in the existence of angels whose function it is to convey the souls of the deceased into the other world one turns naturally at first to Judaism. A cursory examination of the data indicates that such a belief finds no expression in the literature which became canonical among the Jews, and fails to appear even in so extensive a treatment of the subject of the soul's fate at death as that found in 4 Esdras, 7, 75-101. Here the souls of the righteous return to their Maker and to rest without the ministration of angels, while the souls of the wicked wander about unguided, in anguish and restlessness.

In other of the later Jewish writings, however, angels do appear in connection with the death of man. The celestial power most frequently mentioned in the later sources is the 'angel of death.'<sup>15</sup> Being a personification of death itself and a solitary visitor whose appearance brings gloom to the wicked and the righteous alike, he can hardly be considered a figure analogous to the angels of the Apocalypse. In the Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs, however, a closer parallel may exist, a discrepancy in the reading of the various manuscripts leaving the matter somewhat doubtful. Here we are told:

For the latter ends of men do show their righteousness (or unrighteousness) when they meet the angels of the Lord and Satan. For when the soul departs troubled, it is tormented by evil spirits which also it served in lusts and evil works.

<sup>14</sup> Ibid.

<sup>15</sup> Cf. for instance Apocalypse of Baruch 21, 23.

(Cod. a) But if he is peaceful, with joy he meeteth the angel of peace, and he leadeth him into eternal life.<sup>16</sup>

Whatever may be said of the evidential value of the passage from the Testaments, the idea of the appearance of angels at the bedside of the dying was certainly present in Judaism in New Testament times, at least in the minds of some folk. We find it clearly expressed in the story of Dives and Lazarus, where the beggar is "carried by the angels into Abraham's bosom."<sup>17</sup>

None of the passages referred to affords the slightest description of these angelic visitors. The earliest bit of descriptive testimony is found in the Siphre to Deuteronomy 34, 5, where it is said:

Wenn Gott die Seelen der Gerechten hinwegnimmt, nimmt er sie hinweg mit Ruhe des Geistes; wenn er aber die Seelen der Gottlosen hinwegnimmt, übergibt er sie schlimmen (bösen) Engeln, grausamen Engeln, damit sie ihre Seelen herausreissen.<sup>18</sup>

Even this parallel is somewhat remote. It does not furnish a clue to the origin of the wealth of graphic detail contained within the description of the visiting angels in the Apocalypse. One might of course suppose that pious imagination would eventually succeed in endowing the angels meeting the souls of the righteous with all that is attractive while simultaneously equipping the others with all that is loathsome, but it is questionable whether such an explanation of the description given in the Apocalypse is fully satisfactory, and moreover the angels who come to meet the wicked in the Christian document are not really purely Satanic since they do on occasion rebuke the wicked soul for its impiety.<sup>19</sup> Consequently, if data can be found which will shed light upon the description of the angels

<sup>16</sup> Testament of Asher, 6, 4-6, transl. by Charles, *The Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs*, 1908. The rival text would leave it entirely uncertain whether the encounter between the souls and the angels takes place here on earth at the side of the body, or upon the souls' arrival in the other world.

<sup>17</sup> Lk. 16, 22.

<sup>18</sup> Strack-Billerbeck, *Kommentar zum N. T. aus Talmud und Midrasch*, vol. II, 1924, p. 225.

<sup>19</sup> JAOS, VIII, p. 194: thou wilt be recompensed, all that is proper, for thy wickedness.



of the Apocalypse, we shall welcome them as supplementing the information gleaned from Jewish sources for the belief in the existence of such functionaries.

Additional data of the kind required will be found in the Manichaean and Mandaean texts and traditions. The most explicit statement concerning the Manichaean conception of the fate of the soul after death is contained in the *Fihrist* of An Nadim. Flügel's translation of the passage in question reads in part as follows:

Wenn der Tod einem Wahrhaftigen naht, sendet der Urgott einen Lichtgott in der Gestalt des leitenden Weisen und mit ihm drei Götter und zugleich mit diesen das Wassergefäß, das Kleid, die Kopfbinde, die Krone und den Lichtkranz. Mit ihnen kommt die Jungfrau, ähnlich der Seele dieses Wahrhaftigen. . . . Auch erscheint ihm der Teufel der Habgier und der Sinnenlust mit anderen Teufeln. Sobald der Wahrhaftige diese erblickt ruft er die Göttin welche die Gestalt des Weisen angenommen hat, und die anderen drei Götter zu Hilfe, und diese nähern sich ihm. Sobald die Teufel sie gewahr werden, wenden sie sich fliehend um. Jene aber nehmen diesen Wahrhaftigen, bekleiden ihn mit der Krone, dem Kranze und dem Kleide, geben ihm das Wassergefäß in die Hand, und steigen mit ihm auf. . . .

Wenn aber dem sündigen Menschen, über den die Habgier und die Sinnenlust die Oberhand gewonnen hat, der Tod erscheint, so nahen sich ihm die Teufel, packen und quälen ihn und lassen ihn die Schreckgestalten sehen. Auch jene Götter sind da und mit ihnen das erwähnte Kleid, so dass der sündige Mensch glaubt, sie seien zu seiner Erlösung erschienen. Sie sind aber nur da, ihn mit Vorwürfen zu erfüllen.<sup>20</sup>

A number of the elements of this narrative need not concern us at all, for instance the 'three gods' whose identity and Iranian origin A. V. W. Jackson<sup>21</sup> and Pavry<sup>22</sup> have discussed. Other elements provoke an immediate interest and will be discussed later on, such as the crown and the 'vessel of water,' the presence of hostile powers even at the bedside of the righteous, and the rebuke administered by 'jene Götter' to the wicked. Our present concern is with the "maiden, the semblance of the spirit of that righteous one." She, or a power corresponding to her, must be thought to present itself to the wicked, being included among 'jene Götter,' or the 'Schreckgestalten,' men-

<sup>20</sup> Flügel, *Mani*, 1862, p. 100.

<sup>21</sup> *JAOS*, XLIII, p. 20.

<sup>22</sup> J. D. C. Pavry, *The Zoroastrian Doctrine of a Future Life*, New York, 1929, p. 68, n. 42.

tioned by An Nadim. At first glance she seems somewhat remote from the angels of the Apocalypse, but if we remember that the Fihrist is a late secondary source (987 A.D.) and take recourse to the primary data found in the Turfan texts, her significance for the subject of the present inquiry will become more evident.

The Turfan texts do not, so far as we know, contribute a description of the power, "the semblance of the spirit of the righteous." They do, however, give a graphic description of the corresponding power which manifests itself to the wicked. One of the texts describes

the coming of the lying, hairy, grisly she-demon (and) her seizing of the wicked souls. Into dark hell she drags (the soul) away, it is said. Smiting it upon the head she thrusts it down.<sup>23</sup>

Another is still more graphic:

The lying, hairy, grisly she-demon comes, it is said. Her forehead (?) with its brows is like a cloud of hail, it is said. Her glance is like a bloody (?) dart, it is said. Her dug is like a dark-colored nail.<sup>24</sup>

In the description of the she-demon we find traits analogous to those embodied in the description of the angels who meet the souls of the wicked in the Apocalypse, for instance the hairy, grisly appearance and the reference to the nature of her glance. The she-demon stands in contrast, moreover, to the 'maiden,' whom we must assume to have a rather pleasing appearance. We note finally that a relation exists between the 'maiden' and the soul she is sent to guide. She has the likeness of the soul.

Leaving the Manichaean texts we pass for the moment to the Mandaeen scriptures. Of these writings the 'Left Ginza' affords a great deal of information concerning the fate of the righteous soul at death. At least two distinct conceptions are presented regarding the soul's own attitude at the time of death, and a number of conflicting statements concerning the identity

<sup>23</sup> A. von Le Coq, *Türkische Manichaia aus Chotscho*, II, *Abhandlungen*, Berlin Academy, 1919, fragment T. II. D. 178 verso, 1-12. English translation by A. V. W. Jackson in Pavry, p. 48.

<sup>24</sup> T. II. D. 169. iii, 16-22, Le Coq, p. 11, and Pavry, p. 48.

of the powers coming to meet the righteous can be quoted. Sometimes it is merely the angel Šauriel, שאוריִל, who appears.<sup>25</sup> His function is to produce the separation of body and soul. He corresponds, however, more closely to the Jewish 'angel of death,' and can therefore be omitted from the present discussion. In the majority of the texts it is 'the helper' who appears upon the scene in company with other powers the identity of which is uncertain.<sup>26</sup> He corresponds to the 'geleitende Weise' of the Fihrist and the 'helper' of the passage in the Apocalypse,<sup>27</sup> and represents the saviour himself.<sup>28</sup> In the Manichaean texts the messengers bring with them certain articles of wearing apparel. They are described in one of the hymns of the Left Ginza as a beautiful garment of splendor, a turban of light, a wreath of αἰθήρ, and such other things as the Great Life presents to its Uthras (angelic spirits).<sup>29</sup> In these garments the soul is clothed before beginning the heavenward ascent. One additional element in the Mandaic description of the powers who come to meet the soul has yet to be mentioned. It is contained in the verses which have occasioned so much discussion since Reitzenstein's original remarks concerning them:<sup>30</sup>

Ich gehe meinem Abbild entgegen  
und mein Abbild geht mir entgegen;  
Es kost mich und umarmt mich  
als kehrte ich aus der Gefangenschaft zurück.<sup>31</sup>

Whatever be the identity of the heavenly person referred to in these words, it is evident that between it and the soul there exists a relationship similar to that obtaining in the Manichaean texts between the soul and the "maiden in the semblance of the spirit of the righteous." By the same token an analogous relationship should exist between the 'she-demon' and the soul of the wicked.

<sup>25</sup> Ginza, transl. by M. Lidzbarski, 1925, p. 424, 30 and elsewhere.

<sup>26</sup> Ibid. p. 473 and elsewhere.

<sup>27</sup> See above, pp. 213 f.

<sup>28</sup> Ibid. p. 500, 20-30. For Hibil as one of the Mandaean saviours see my *Anthropos and Son of Man*, New York, 1927, pp. 64-70.

<sup>29</sup> Ginza, p. 516, 14-19. A girdle is also frequently mentioned, Ginza, p. 542, 27.

<sup>30</sup> Das iranische Erlösungsmysterium, 1921, p. 54.

<sup>31</sup> Ginza, p. 559.

Before it will be possible to gauge the significance of these Manichæan and Mandaean conceptions for the interpretation of the Apocalypse, it will be necessary to explain what has become evident from the studies of Reitzenstein and Pavry regarding the origin of the 'maiden' and the 'she-demon.'

At least since the days of Zarathushtra the opinion existed in Persian religion that each individual soul has in heaven a counterpart, the 'Daena,' the religion, the conscience, or the religious conscience.<sup>32</sup> With this counterpart the soul is united at the disintegration of the body. Of the meeting of soul and Daena and of the appearance of the Daena we have extensive accounts in the Nasks of the Avesta and in later Pahlavi writings. At the end of the third night after death, so we are told in the Hadokht Nask, while the soul is still in the body, it inhales fragrant odors blowing toward it from the south. Simultaneously there is manifested to the righteous individual:

his own Conscience in the form of a maiden, beautiful, radiant, white-armed, robust, fair-faced, erect, high-breasted, of stately form, noble born, of glorious lineage, fifteen years old in appearance, as beautiful in form as the most beautiful of creatures. And the soul of the righteous man addressed her, asking: What damsel art thou . . . ? Then to him his own Conscience gave answer: . . . I am the Conscience of thine own self. . . . When thou sawest another performing burning (of the dead) and idol-worship, then thou wouldst sit down chanting the Gāthās. . . . So me, being lovable, (thou madest) still more lovable; me, being beautiful, (thou madest) still more beautiful.<sup>33</sup>

The description of the person who comes to meet the wicked souls has been omitted from the Nask just quoted. The situation is depicted in terms contrary to the above, for at the end of the third night the soul of the wicked smells a foul wind blowing from the north. This wind precedes the coming of a dreadful hag whose description is furnished in the following passage of a Pahlavi work:

And in that wind it (the soul) beheld that which was its own conscience and deeds, as a whore, naked and decrepit, with exposed thighs in front and buttocks behind, with endless spots, like the most noxious of creatures.

<sup>32</sup> On the meaning of the word, see Pavry, pp. 28-29.

<sup>33</sup> Hadokht Nask, 2, 9-14; cf. Pavry's translation, pp. 34-35.



The soul then asks the hag: Who art thou . . . ? I never saw any uglier, filthier, and more stinking. The apparition replies: I am thy bad deeds, O youth of evil thought . . . and of evil conscience. It is on account of thy will and actions that I am ugly and vile, disgusting and diseased.<sup>34</sup>

With the evidence for these Iranian conceptions before us it is virtually impossible to escape Reitzenstein's conclusion,<sup>35</sup> that the Mandaean 'Abbild' and the Manichaean 'maiden' on one side, and the she-demon on the other, represent the Iranian Daena in the two possible forms of her self-manifestation. Having made this admission, we shall, however, have to take a further step and say that the Daena may also be the source for the conception of the two types of angelic visitors found in the Apocalypse. Two alternative derivations thus lie before us, one Jewish, the other Iranian. The use of the name angel, applied to the figures of the Apocalypse, will hardly militate against the Iranian derivation, since to the Christian all heavenly spirits were quite naturally called angels. Nor will the difference in gender be a serious obstacle, the feminine form of the Daena, so immediately appropriate to a counterpart of the soul, changing automatically with the adoption of the name angel to the masculine.

The final decision between the two alternatives which have thus suggested themselves will naturally be determined by the capability of the Iranian and syncretistic parallels to furnish clues to the origin of the details embodied in the description of the angels of the Apocalypse. Reference has already been made to the similarities existing between the Manichaean description of the 'she-demon' and the account in the Apocalypse of the angels who come to meet the wicked. Lack of evidence about the 'maiden' in Manicheism does not permit a comparison with the angels who visit the righteous. Here, however, the Mandaic texts, where the sunlike splendor shining from the face of the angels of the Apocalypse is characteristic of all heavenly beings, where the clothes brought to the souls of the righteous are actually also the equipment of the messengers as

<sup>34</sup> Artak Viraz Namak, 17, 12-15; cf. Pavry, p. 42.

<sup>35</sup> Das Iranische Erlösungsmysterium, pp. 28-31.

heavenly functionaries,<sup>36</sup> and where the crown or wreath is not only brought after death but plays as well an important part in sacramental practice,<sup>37</sup> afford excellent parallels. To the mention of the protruding teeth no analogies appear to exist. That the Apocalypse mentions the garment only as the property of the angels and not as something conferred upon the righteous souls, is probably due to the fact that the garment presented to the souls in the syncretistic texts is the heavenly body of the soul,<sup>38</sup> for which the apocalyptic writer, since he believed in a resurrection of the fleshly body, had no room in his theology.

In the description of the heavenly visitors who in the Apocalypse approach the righteous, one important element has yet to be considered. It is the mention of the seal, or sign, which the angels bring with the crown to the believer. Manichaeans and Mandaeans both have tokens with which the righteous are equipped before beginning their heavenward journey. They serve as passports in the soul's passage of the stellar spheres. In the passage quoted above from An Nadim it is the vessel of water, a substance sacred in Iranian lore and endowed with prophylactic and comforting powers. Mandaean scriptures mention divers signs and seals. In some instances the sign is apparently merely a sacred word or name.<sup>39</sup> In others it is the alms or the good works of the believer,<sup>40</sup> and in still others it is said to be taken from the water of baptism,<sup>41</sup> and to consist of 'Wasserwogen' which the individual holds in his hands,<sup>42</sup> an interpretation which approaches the Manichaean conception. There is thus no question as to the existence of parallels to the seal 'held in the hand' by the angels of the Apocalypse.<sup>43</sup> One is, however, curious to know exactly what the Christian

<sup>36</sup> Compare the passage quoted above, p. 218.

<sup>37</sup> Compare the baptismal liturgy in Lidzbarski, *Mandäische Liturgien*, 1920, pp. 1-61.

<sup>38</sup> Cf. Reitzenstein, *Die hellenistischen Mysterienreligionen*, 3d ed., 1927, pp. 353-357.

<sup>39</sup> Ginza, p. 184, 22.

<sup>40</sup> Ibid. p. 525, 34-35.

<sup>41</sup> Ibid. p. 187, 24-26.

<sup>42</sup> Ibid. p. 517, 28.

<sup>43</sup> For the fact that the seal in the Christian text must actually have been 'held in the hand,' see the notes attached to the text quoted above, p. 213.

writer supposed this seal to be. A Mandaic hymn in the Qolasta serves to call attention to one possibility. It makes the believer say:

Mein Zeichen war nicht das Feuer,  
nicht (das Oel) das Christus salbte;  
Mein Zeichen ist der Jordan lebenden Wassers  
dem niemand gewachsen ist.<sup>44</sup>

In this passage the Mandaean believer, holding fast to the opinion that his own 'sign' is invincible, rejects as impotent both fire, the sacred element of the Persians, and the 'sign' of the Christians, which in his vicinity is apparently the sacred oil. Now the significance of the chrism in ancient Christianity is well attested. Two particular virtues attach to it. The first is exorcistic. It is attested in Mark 6, 13 ("also they cast out a number of demons and cured a number of sick people by anointing them with oil"), in an Egyptian Didache fragment,<sup>45</sup> and in the unction which precedes the act of immersion in baptismal liturgies and practices.<sup>46</sup> The second virtue of the sacred oil is that of conferring the Holy Spirit. Upon it the Christian draws in the *chrismatio* which follows the act of immersion in baptismal practice.<sup>47</sup> Of the act of *chrismatio*, however, the *signatio*, in which the neophyte is 'signed' upon his forehead with a finger dipped in the oil, is liturgically part and parcel. The two are one act. That the spirit-conferring oil should thus come to be called a sign or seal is entirely intelligible. Nor need it be only as the result of a long liturgical development that such a nomenclature as that presupposed in the Qolasta passage should have been achieved. The possibility exists that the sacred chrism was a 'seal' even in the days of Paul. In 2 Corinthians 1, 21, where Paul appears to refer to baptism,<sup>48</sup> we find *χρίσας, σφραγισάμενος* and *δοὺς τὸν ἄρραβῶνα τοῦ πνεύματος* as correlative phrases. It is therefore quite within

<sup>44</sup> Mandäische Liturgien, p. 154, 6-7.

<sup>45</sup> Cf. Bihlmeyer, Die apostolischen Väter, 1929, pp. xviii-xx.

<sup>46</sup> Cf. Rietschel, Lehrbuch der Liturgik, vol. II, 1909, pp. 36-37.

<sup>47</sup> Ibid. pp. 50-52.

<sup>48</sup> Cf. Lietzmann, Handbuch zum N. T., vol. III, 1st ed., 1913, ad loc. In later texts *βεβαιῶν* is a technical term for baptism. It corresponds to the Mandaic *ܠܬܝܬܝܢܐ*.

the realm of possibility that the 'seal' of the Christian in the Apocalypse of Paul is the sacred chrism. That this seal should be brought by the angel at the death of the righteous need not disturb us, for the earthly oil is but the counterpart of the heavenly chrism which flows in the river Gihon that proceeds from the city of Christ,<sup>49</sup> and the earthly unction and baptism the counterpart of a heavenly unction and baptism received at the time of entrance into the world beyond.<sup>50</sup>

By the use of the Odes of Solomon it is possible to construct yet another hypothesis concerning the identity of the seal brought by the angel of the Apocalypse. In Ode 28, 15 mention is made of the believer who carries "water in his right hand." This has the effect of warding off the hostile powers attacking him. Since the hostile powers are compared in the Ode to mad dogs, Harris thinks that the reference to the water is inspired by the realization that "hydrophoria is the natural cure for hydrophobia."<sup>51</sup> In a sense that is of course true, but one can hardly refrain from wondering whether this completely explains the passage. The water might with equal facility have suggested the mad dogs, and since the mad dogs are naturally only symbols of malignant powers, the water too may have an ulterior significance. The water to which Ode 28, 15 makes reference would most naturally be connected with baptism. Yet it could hardly be the water of the *lavacrum*, for one would scarce be able to explain how or why it should be carried in the hand. Now we know that in the liturgical practice of the Mandaeans<sup>52</sup> and of certain other syncretistic sects<sup>53</sup> the rite of baptism embraced an act of drinking a draught of water. This act presupposes a conception of the function of the elements used in baptism which is different from that previously commented upon. Here it is not the oil but the water which

<sup>49</sup> Gihon is a river of oil in both G (Tischendorf, p. 52) and L (James, p. 24, 15-20), but not in S.

<sup>50</sup> See, for the heavenly unction, Bousset, *Hauptprobleme der Gnosis*, 1902, pp. 200-201, and, for the heavenly baptism, Hippolytus, *Philosophumena*, v. 27, 1-3 and *Ginza*, p. 311, 37-40; p. 492, 25-30.

<sup>51</sup> J. R. Harris, *The Odes and Psalms of Solomon*, vol. II, 2d ed., 1920, p. 361.

<sup>52</sup> *Mandäische Liturgien*, p. 27, 10: Gieb ihnen drei Handvoll Wasser zu trinken.

<sup>53</sup> Sethians, Hippolytus, *Philosophumena* v. 19, 21; Justinus, *ibid.* v. 27, 2.



confers the Spirit, a conception reëchoed in Tertullian.<sup>54</sup> The draught assures the entrance of the Spirit into the neophyte. It is not surprising under these circumstances to find spiritless oil referred to derogatively as ἄλαλον χρῖσμα<sup>55</sup> by the Naasenes who seem also to have known the baptismal draught. But the opposite of an ἄλαλον χρῖσμα is the ὕδωρ λαλοῦν of which Ignatius speaks<sup>56</sup> and to which the Odist probably refers in the words:

And speaking waters drew near my lips  
From the fountain of the Lord plenteously.<sup>57</sup>

We shall therefore have to admit the possibility of the draught of water being a part of the baptismal practice with which the Odist was familiar. If that be true, it will probably be the water of the baptismal draught to which he refers in Ode 28, 15 as being held in the right hand and frightening away the hostile powers, and nothing would be more appropriate as a token or talisman brought by an angel to the righteous at the moment when they are preparing to traverse the region of the hostile planetary powers, than a vessel of this same 'living water' drawn from the 'fountain of the Lord.' The 'seal' of the Apocalypse, so interpreted, would be analogous to the 'flask of water' which acts as a token to the Manichæan in the passage quoted above from An Nadim, and to the talisman which the Mandaean believer mentions when, in connection with his ascent to heaven, he says: "Die Wasserwogen halte ich in meiner Hand."<sup>58</sup>

Between the two interpretations of the 'seal' of the Apocalypse thus suggested it is difficult to choose. More important in the present context than such a choice is the fact that neither of the two interpretations takes us very far away from the second of the two spheres of thought in which we have been searching for the origin of the angels of the Apocalypse. Adding what we have thus learned to what has previously been said concerning the description of the angels themselves, we should be inclined to suppose that fundamentally they repre-

<sup>54</sup> De baptismo, 3-4.

<sup>56</sup> Ignatius, Romans 7, 2.

<sup>58</sup> Ginza, p. 517, 28.

<sup>55</sup> Hippolytus, v. 7, 19; v. 9, 22.

<sup>57</sup> Ode 11, 6.

sent the Iranian Daena in the syncretized form of her two diverse manifestations.

It goes without saying that Christian and ultimately Jewish elements have entered into the description. The name angels applied to the contrasted figures, and the change of status implied in the name, is an instance of this fact. What is said about the 'lack of mercy' on the part of the angels who come to meet the wicked is derived from the belief that the wicked have after death no further claim upon a God among whose preëminent attributes are *חַסֵּד וְרַחֲמִים*. To the garments upon which the name of the living God is inscribed catacomb frescoes furnish the best analogies,<sup>59</sup> although the practice of using garments so inscribed will hardly be of Christian origin.

From what has been said about the relation of the angels of the passages quoted from the Apocalypse to the Daena, the Manichæan 'maiden' and 'she-demon,' it will not be necessary to conclude that our document belongs to a remote period in the development of Christian thought. Chance has preserved in the Syriac Acts of Thomas an indication that the influences which have moulded the Apocalypse were already at work in the late second century. In the sixth of the Acts, Thomas brings to life a woman recently slain by her lover. After her revivification the apostle asks her: Tell me whither thou wentest and what thou didst see? The reference is of course to the events which took place after her death. The woman answers:

A man whose aspect was hideous, and his body black, and his clothes filthy took me away and carried me to a place which was full of pits and a stinking smell was diffused in its midst.<sup>60</sup>

This is indubitably a being of the type with which we have become familiar. It is an added testimony to the provenience of the Apocalypse.

<sup>59</sup> F. J. Dölger, *Sphragis*, 1911, pp. 37-38.

<sup>60</sup> W. Wright, *Apocryphal Acts*, 1871, vol. II, pp. 194-195.

## II

The particular section of the Apocalypse with which we are dealing contains yet other elements worthy of note. Among them none is more immediately provocative of comment than the conception of the relation between the dying and their good or bad works.

After having beheld the two groups of heavenly messengers Paul asks the *angelus interpres*: O my Lord, wilt thou not grant to me an opportunity that I may see the souls of the righteous, how they depart out of the world? The request is granted and the apostle is asked to look down toward the earth. What he sees he relates in the following words:

And I looked and saw, and beheld one of the sons of men fallen nigh unto death. And the angel said unto me: This is a just one and righteous in all his works. And I saw everything which he did for God standing before him in the hour of his departure from the world.<sup>61</sup>

Both A and C paraphrase, omitting the reference to the appearance of the good works. *And I looked . . . unto death*: G erroneously omits; *and beheld*: L omits; *this*: L adds quem vides; *and righteous in all his works*: omit with G L; *And I saw*: L prefixes et iterum aspexi; *for God*: G omits, L propter nomen dei et omnia studia eius quorum meminit et quorum non meminit omnia . . .; *hour of his departure*: G L ἐν τῇ ὥρᾳ τῆς ἀνάγκης.

The narrative concerning the death of the wicked begins as follows:

And I looked down and saw, and behold another soul departing from the body . . . and I saw all his wickedness coming before him and after him, while it encompassed him before his eyes.<sup>62</sup>

Both A and C paraphrase, omitting the reference to the appearance of the evil works. *And I looked etc*: L has merely the command of the angel to look; *looked down*: G adds εἰς τὴν γῆν; *another soul*: G τὴν ψυχὴν τοῦ ἀσεβοῦς; *and I saw . . . his eyes*: G has the simpler and more probable: καὶ ἶδον πάντα τὰ ἔργα αὐτοῦ ἃ ἐποίησεν σταθέντα ἔμπροσθεν αὐτοῦ, while L renders et vidi omnem contemptum peccatoris et omnia que egit, et in unum asteterunt ante eum in hora necessitatis.

<sup>61</sup> JAOS, VIII, pp. 191-192.

<sup>62</sup> Ibid. pp. 193-194.

The particular point of interest in these sections from the Apocalypse is that the good and bad works of an individual appear by his bedside at the moment of death like so many good and evil spirits. One naturally wonders whence the idea may be derived.

A very realistic treatment was accorded good and bad works in Judaism. They were considered so many existential realities and were thought to be preserved in a treasure-house in heaven upon which the righteous could draw, to the extent of their deposit and even beyond, for the purpose of their own justification before God.<sup>63</sup> There is, however, to our knowledge nothing in Judaism which would involve their personification and appearance at the bedside of the dying. The nearest approach to such a conception is found, it would seem, in the Tosephta, Pea 4, 18 (24). Here Monobazus king of Adiabene, when the nature of his reign is criticized, remarks:

Meine Väter haben Schätze in dieser Welt gesammelt, und ich habe Schätze für die zukünftige Welt gesammelt; sieh: "Vor dir hergehen wird dein Almosen und die Herrlichkeit Jahwe's wird dich aufnehmen" (Isaiah 58, 8 in Midrash form).<sup>64</sup>

Even here, however, there is no guarantee that the alms, which are of course among the officially recognized 'good works,' ascend to heaven with the righteous at the moment of death or that they are in any sense personified. Indeed, in the section of 4 Esdras in which the fate of the soul in the seven days after death is most explicitly treated, we are definitely told that not until 'the last times' will the individual catch a glimpse of the treasure of good works laid up with the Most High.<sup>65</sup>

The realistic Jewish conception of good works as treasures preserved in heaven naturally went over into Christianity, and finds an echo there not only in the gospels<sup>66</sup> but also in later Christian literature.<sup>67</sup> Now it is interesting to note that in

<sup>63</sup> Enoch 38, 2; 4 Esdras 7, 77; 8, 33. 36; II Baruch 14, 12; 24, 1.

<sup>64</sup> Strack-Billerbeck, I, p. 430.

<sup>65</sup> 4 Esdras 7, 77; cf. 1 Timothy 5, 24.

<sup>66</sup> Mt. 6, 20; Mk. 10, 21, etc.

<sup>67</sup> For example, Ignatius, Smyrnaeans 11, 2: that your works may be perfected on earth and in heaven.



Syria the metaphor used in speaking of the good works sometimes changed. Here we find them in certain instances interpreted as the materials from which the individual constructs for himself a heavenly habitation. A case in point is the story of the Acts of Thomas in which the apostle by his alms builds a palace in heaven for king Gundaphar.<sup>68</sup> We have analogies in Aphraates, who speaks of good works as the gold, silver, and precious stones out of which the Christian constructs for himself a house not built on sand,<sup>69</sup> and among the Mandaeans, for instance in the passage:

Wehe dem Baumeister der vor sich keinen Bau aufgeführt hat. Er hat keinen Bau vor sich aufgeführt auf den er, wenn er dahingeht, sich stützen könnte.<sup>70</sup>

The reason for this change in metaphor is possibly to be found in the fact that at least in Syria 'treasure in heaven' was a term more frequently used to denote the resources of God himself, either the riches of God's wisdom<sup>71</sup> or of his Spirit.<sup>72</sup> These treasures of God himself, however, did tend to be personified. Evidence of this fact will be found in the statement of Epiphanius that the Valentinians spoke of the powers which compose the divine pleroma as *θησαυρίσματα*,<sup>73</sup> and in the religious terminology of the Mandaeans where *עוּתְרָא*, riches, is the standard designation of what we should call angels. Yet it would be incorrect to suppose that the personification of the good works found in the Apocalypse of Paul was derived from a confusion of the treasures of God himself and the treasures laid up by the individual in heaven. The very Mandaeans who have so clearly distinguished between the treasure that is God's and the good works that belong to men, do also seem to personify the good works. In a passage which describes the dangers attending the heavenward journey of the soul we are told:

<sup>68</sup> Wright, pp. 159-165.

<sup>69</sup> *Demonstratio* 1, 12, *Patrologia Syriaca*, vol. I, coll. 27-32.

<sup>70</sup> *Das Johannesbuch der Mandäer*, ed. M. Lidzbarski, vol. II, 1915, p. 179, 9-11.

<sup>71</sup> Odes of Solomon, 41, 10; Aphraates, *Dem.* 10, 8, *Patr. Syr.* I, coll. 460 and 464; both based (?) on Wisdom of Solomon 7, 13b-14a.

<sup>72</sup> Acts of Thomas, Wright, p. 189.

<sup>73</sup> *Panarion*, *Haeresis* 5, 3-4.

Am Wege ist ein Meer, das ohne Übergang ist. Nein, jeden einzelnen bringen nur Lohnzahlung und Almosenspende heran und bringen ihn hinüber. Nur seine Werke gehen als Führer vor ihm einher.<sup>74</sup>

A similar passage in the burial liturgy: "Einem jeden der Almosen gibt, wird das Almosen ein Helfer sein,"<sup>75</sup> indicates that there is a definite connection between the death of the individual and the appearance of the 'helper.' While preventing us from thinking that the personification of the good works found in the Apocalypse of Paul is due to a confusion between the treasures of God and those of the individual, the Mandaean texts do furnish us with direct parallels to the personification. It is not wise to infer with Reitzenstein, Bauer, and others a direct dependence of the Christians upon Mandaic tradition. Accordingly, with the establishment of the Mandaic parallels we have not yet answered the question of the origin of the personification.

The whole idea of the appearance of the good works at the bedside of the dying can well be explained as a conception of which the ultimate roots are psychological. It casts into an objective form the phenomena of the introspective process that is so characteristic of the last moments of life. Yet even this objectification, and the personification of the good works with which it is intimately associated in the Apocalypse, will be most likely to arise in an environment where the analysis of the subjective side of life is cultivated and where a genuine tendency exists to deal with abstract things and endow them with personality. Since it is generally recognized that the subjective and abstract spheres of thought are among the least developed in the minds of the Semitic peoples, we should be inclined to look elsewhere for the origin of the particular beliefs with which we are dealing. Iranian religion, in which we seem to have found the origin of the angels who meet the soul at death, and in which the analysis of the subjective aspects of human life and the contemplation of the abstract are so intensively cultivated, would appear to be the appropriate sphere for further inquiry.

<sup>74</sup> Ginza, p. 433, 15-17.

<sup>75</sup> Mandäische Liturgien, p. 107, 8-9.

In the Pahlavi text known as the *Datastan i Menum i Khrat* we have the closest Iranian parallel to the opinion of the Apocalypse that man's deeds appear at his death-bed. The passage in question reads:

And when he who is wicked dies, his soul then rushes about for three days and nights in the vicinity of the head of that wicked one and sobs thus: "Whither do I go, and now what do I make as a refuge?" And the sin and crime of every kind that were committed by him in the worldly existence, he sees with his eyes in those three days and nights.<sup>76</sup>

The personification of the individual's deeds in this and other Pahlavi texts<sup>77</sup> is indisputable. It represents a secondary development in Iranian religious thought, having no immediate parallel in the Avesta. Yet it is a development based upon conceptions such as those found in the *Vishtasp Yasht*, where the soul abides in the state of good word during the first night, and in that of good deed during the second night after death.<sup>78</sup> The Pahlavi documents are of course late in origin. Yet the development leading to the personification of the good works, to which they testify, must have taken place before the days that witnessed the origins of Manicheism, for in the *Fihrist* of An Nadim the righteous Manichee endeavors to gain the assistance of the heavenly powers advancing toward him through the mediation of his deeds. The passage in question reads:

Er ruft um Hilfe und sucht durch die guten Werke, die er getan hat, und durch die Bewahrung der Religion und der Wahrhaftigen sich ihm zuneigende Vermittelung. Diese machen ihn auch frei von den Teufeln.<sup>79</sup>

Nothing would thus seem to oppose the hypothesis that the personification of man's deeds and the attendance of these deeds upon him at death, as found in the Apocalypse, in Manicheism, and among the Mandaeans have their origin in Iran,

<sup>76</sup> II, 158-160, *Sacred Books of the East*, vol. XXIV, Pahlavi texts, ed. Max Müller, vol. III, 1885, p. 22.

<sup>77</sup> For further Pahlavi parallels cf. Pavry, pp. 23-26.

<sup>78</sup> *Yasht* 24, 54; cf. Pavry, p. 11. The process which in the Pahlavi texts has resulted in the personification of the individual's deeds is similar to that which gave rise to the personal *Daena*. It is therefore not surprising to find that the good deeds which the righteous sees in the *Menuki Khrat*, II, 123-126 appear in the form of a maiden.

<sup>79</sup> Flügel, p. 100.

just as do the two groups of angels previously considered. Indeed there are two details in the narrative of the Apocalypse which make the acceptance of the hypothesis positively reasonable. The first is that, as in the religious beliefs of Persia, the appearance of the good angels and the good works is part of a concourse embracing demoniacal forces,<sup>80</sup> and the second that the triple restoration of the soul to the body on the part of the evil spirits<sup>81</sup> is best explained as an indication that for the writer of the Apocalypse, as for the Persians, the process of the separation of soul and body consumes three days and nights. In the personification of the good works and their presence at the death-bed of man we have, then, a further indication of the provenience of the Apocalypse of Paul.

### III

On the third night, after the encounter with its deeds and with the opposing groups of angels, the soul is ready to begin its heavenward ascent. This ascent takes it past the evil planetary powers, who subject it to an examination. The Apocalypse has little to say on the subject of this heavenward journey. Judging by the mass of evidence on the subject to be found in related documents we may assume that the theme had become somewhat threadbare when the Apocalypse was written. What is recorded agrees in general with what Anz<sup>82</sup> has pre-

<sup>80</sup> Cf. JAOS, vol. VIII, p. 192: And there approached him wicked angels . . . and those good angels ruled over that righteous one; and p. 194: And I saw that the good angels descended to meet him . . . and there came also those evil angels. And those good angels saw that it (the soul) had not one good work; and when they fled away from it, those evil angels took the rule over it. The best Iranian parallel is to be found in the Rivayat of Kama Bahra: When life is separated from the body, the wicked Ahriman, together with all the demons, tries to capture the soul . . . Cf. Pavry, p. 19. The importance attaching, as far back as Sassanian times, to the rites performed for the soul during the period when it is presumed still to remain in this world, indicates that the idea of a competition for the possession of the soul is ancient, though not reported in the Pahlavi writings.

<sup>81</sup> JAOS, vol. VIII, p. 194: and those evil angels took the rule over it, and pulled it out in severe anger and haste. And when it (the soul) went out, they turned it back three times.

<sup>82</sup> Zur Frage nach dem Ursprung des Gnostizismus, Texte und Untersuchungen, vol. XV, 1897.



sented as the general theme of the ascent, except that the souls of the wicked are here not kept in the 'guardhouses' of the evil planets but are demanded of the evil powers by the voice of God himself, which indicates that the powers of the stellar sphere have lost a great deal of their one-time significance. This loss will be due at least in part to the jealousy with which the Christians guarded their monotheism and to the belief in hell as the place of recompense.

Immediately after its departure from the body on the third day the soul has an encounter with another heavenly power. This encounter deserves further comment. Where the fate of the righteous soul is in question the Apocalypse describes the meeting in the following words:

And there came to meet it he who was its guardian in life, and said to it: O soul of mine, be of good courage, and be joyful, and I will rejoice over thee, that thou hast done the will of our Lord all the days of thy life; and I carried thy good works by day and by night before God.<sup>83</sup>

A paraphrases. C contains two descriptions of the meeting of the wicked souls and their guardian angels. The whole section is omitted by G. *in life*: L *singulis diebus*; *and be joyful . . . over thee*: L has merely *ego enim gaudeo in te*; *our Lord*: L *dei*; *all the days of thy life*: L *in terris*; *by day and by night*: L *qualiter se habent*.

The meeting of this same power and the souls of the wicked is described as follows:

And when they (the evil angels) pulled it out, that daring one (the soul) groaned in bitterness; and the angel who had conducted it in life ran before it saying unto it: "O miserable soul, I am thy angel that carried thy sins day and night before God. How often did I say unto thee: 'Do not despise the commandments of the Lord.' If I had power over myself I would not do service for thee, no not for one hour. . . . Know thou, O soul, that from this time onward I will be a stranger unto thee."<sup>84</sup>

A paraphrases, but mentions the 'Engel der Seele.' C comes closer to S and L, but not sufficiently to warrant quoting variants. *And when . . . in bitterness*: G and L make this a dependent clause, G reading *ἀντὶς δὲ ἐξελθούσης*

<sup>83</sup> JAOS, vol. VIII, p. 192.

<sup>84</sup> Ibid. p. 194.

ἐκ τοῦ σκηνώματος, L reading *et cum produxissent*; *the angel who had conducted it is life*: G συνήθης ἄγγελος, L *consuetus angelus*; *miserable soul*: G adds *ποῦ πορεύει*; *I am thy angel . . . before God*: G interprets incorrectly and paraphrases *εἰμὶ ὁ καθ' ἐκάστην ἡμέραν ἀπογραφόμενος τὰς ἀμαρτίας σου*; *How often . . . thy Lord*: L omits; *Know thou . . . unto thee*: L has: *ego tibi quidem alienus factus sum, et tu mihi*.

The guardian angel thus introduced accompanies the soul past the planetary spheres, and succeeds in holding the evil powers away even from the unrighteous till the voice of God intervenes, bidding the evil powers desist from their attempted capture. While resisting the archons the guardian angel remarks:

Know ye that it is a soul of the Lord and he will not cast it aside; neither will I surrender the image of God into the hands of the Wicked One. The Lord supported me all the days of the life of this soul, and he can support me and help me (now), and I will not cast it off until it go up before the throne on high.<sup>85</sup>

Having passed the danger-zone the guardian angel and the soul appear in heaven, where the soul is praised or lamented over by the heavenly hosts. All then present themselves before the throne of God. Here the guardian angel intercedes for the righteous with the words:

I am that spirit of life that dwelt in it, and I found for myself rest. . . . Do unto it, O Lord, according to thy right judgment.<sup>86</sup>

This passage is lacking in G A C, but found also in L. *Do unto it . . . judgment*: L incorrectly construes with *dwelt in it* thus, *habitavi in eam secundum iudicium tuum*.

In presenting the souls of the wicked the guardian angel<sup>87</sup> says:

I am the spirit of life who have been with it and dwelt in it. I found in it no rest. Thou knowest, O Lord, that it hath

<sup>85</sup> JAOS, vol. VIII, pp. 193-194. This passage is lacking in G L S A.

<sup>86</sup> Ibid. p. 193.

<sup>87</sup> S here uses the ambiguous term 'spirit of God,' but the sense of the passage is clear. L C read merely 'spirit'.

afflicted me and distressed me. . . . Do unto it, O Lord, according to thy mercies and thy just judgments.<sup>88</sup>

A G paraphrase this whole passage without immediate reference to the original text, while L is surely corrupted in rendering: *ego sum spiritus qui inhabitabam in eam ex quo facta est, in se autem novi et non est secuta meam voluntatem*. S has the only adequate parallel to the passage dealing with the righteous. C abbreviates: I am the spirit, the breath of life which so-journed with it; judge it according to its judgment.

Confronted with this damaging accusation the wicked soul endeavors to defend itself, claiming sinlessness, but the guardian angel produces a record of everything the soul has done since the beginning of the fourteenth year of its life on earth, thus refuting its claims. Judgment upon the righteous and the wicked having been pronounced by God, the guardian is commanded to carry the soul to its appointed place, whether it be paradise or hell, remaining with it till the resurrection if it goes to the city of the blessed.

The statements thus culled from the Apocalypse of Paul are interesting because they witness to a highly developed conception of the figure and the activity of the guardian angel. Recognizing the significance attaching to this figure in later Judaism,<sup>89</sup> and the testimony that exists in the New Testament for the promptness of its entrance into Christian thought,<sup>90</sup> one is naturally inclined to look to Judaism for an explanation of the guardian angel of the Apocalypse. Indeed there are a number of details in the account in the Apocalypse to which Jewish documents furnish excellent parallels. In II Baruch 11, 15, as in the Apocalypse, the guardian angels bear the good and evil works of men heavenward. In the standard designation of certain angels as *מלאכי השרת* we have a possible analogy to the statement that the angels of the Apocalypse 'do service' to men.<sup>91</sup> That the relation between the guardian angel and man

<sup>88</sup> Ibid. p. 195.

<sup>89</sup> See Stade-Bertholet, *Biblische Theologie des A. T.*, vol. II, 1911, pp. 378-379, and Bousset-Gressmann, *Die Religion des Judentums*, 3d ed., 1926, p. 324.

<sup>90</sup> Mt. 18, 10; Acts 12, 15.

<sup>91</sup> The term *מלאכי השרת* normally refers to the angels as servants of God, but the guardians of the Apocalypse, indicating as they do that they have no power over themselves, are clearly appointed to their office by God and thus really serve him in serving men.

continues after death is a thought entirely familiar to the Jews of the New Testament period, as we know from Enoch 100, 5 and 4 Esdras 7, 85. 95. It is true that in the documents preserved Michael is the only angel to serve as psychopomp,<sup>92</sup> but this is probably due to the fact that the written traditions tell only of the translation of important men deserving special attention. Thus the idea that a guardian angel accompanies the soul of the common man heavenward may well have existed in later Judaism as it does in the mind of the writer of the Apocalypse. Even the passage about the clash between the guardian spirit and the demoniacal powers over the soul is reminiscent of Jewish tradition. A statement attributed to R. Joshua ben Levi (c. 250 A.D.) declares:

Was heisst (Ps. 55, 19): "Er erlöst in Frieden meine Seele"? Das Ebenbild [the guardian angel] geht vor dem Menschen her und die (himmlischen) Wesen rufen aus und sprechen (zu den Dämonen die den Menschen unsichtbar umringen): Machet Platz dem Ebenbild Gottes.<sup>93</sup>

In one significant particular, however, the Jewish guardian angel fails to furnish an adequate parallel to the guardians of the Apocalypse. This detail is contained in the statement that the guardian is "the spirit of life who dwelt in the soul" during its life on earth.

From the discussions which have centred about the origin of Jewish angelology it will of course be generally known that in the Persian Fravashi we have a close parallel to the guardian spirit of the Jews. It is therefore quite natural that we should turn once more to the Iranian sources, seeking to determine whether they furnish a more adequate basis for the origins of the statements made about the guardians in the Apocalypse than do the Jewish writings. What we require above all is a source for the conception that the guardian dwells in the soul and represents there the spirit of life.

The best parallel to this conception is found in a passage of

<sup>92</sup> Apocalypse of Moses 37 f. (= Vita Adae 47).

<sup>93</sup> Strack-Billerbeck, vol. II, 1924, p. 707. The parentheses containing explanatory matter in German are inserted by the editors.



the Bundahishn (ii. 9-12), in which before the creation of the world Ahura Mazda asks the Fravashis whether they would prefer to remain in the spirit world, subject to continual attacks by Ahriman, or whether they would prefer to dwell for a time in the bodily world, contending with the fiend from within material reality, and assuring themselves by his conquest of an undisturbed existence in the future. The Fravashis choose the latter alternative. This passage implies, as students of Iranian theology have been quick to understand,<sup>94</sup> both the preëxistence of the Fravashis and their incarnation in the various elements of the material cosmos. Just why the Fravashis should thus be incorporated in the material being of man is a question answered by the fact that they constitute "the internal essence of things as opposed to the contingent and accidental."<sup>95</sup> This means that they can never be far away from the soul, the proper ego, or I-ness, of the individual. In the Dinkard, moreover, we are told that to the Fravashi falls the lot of preserving in man the breath of life and the bodily energy.<sup>96</sup> We have then a parallel not only for the presence of the guardian in the body of man, but also for an intimate relation between him and the breath of life, or spirit of life. But the similarity between the guardians of the Apocalypse and the Fravashis of Iran does not stop there. The latter are of significance to the soul in the days immediately after the death of the body. Among the ceremonies conducted for the benefit of the dead on the morning of the crucial fourth day, when the soul actually begins its heavenward journey, is one intended to propitiate the Fravashi.<sup>97</sup> This by itself indicates the continuance of its ministrations after death. A description of the nature of these ministrations is afforded by the Sad Dar, where we are told how the guardian spirits render honor to the departed souls in the presence of Ahura Mazda and address the deity with the following words:

<sup>94</sup> See Dhalla, *Zoroastrian Theology*, New York, 1914, pp. 143-144; A. V. W. Jackson, *Die iranische Religion*, in Geiger u. Kuhn, *Grundriss der iranischen Philologie*, vol. II, 1896-1904, p. 643.

<sup>95</sup> Dhalla, p. 143.

<sup>96</sup> Ed. Peshutar and Darab Sanjana, *Bombay*, 1874-1912, vol. VI, p. 353; cf. Dhalla, p. 244.

<sup>97</sup> Pavry, p. 86 and note 75.

These righteous souls did not put us away from remembrance while they were in the world, and we have been satisfied with them; now we are unanimous that thou shouldest provide them equal share of those good works of ours, and make their souls attain to the position of the righteous.

Subsequently we are told:

They utter these words and give those souls confidence while they make out their account. Afterwards, with them, they make the passage of the Cinvat bridge, till they arrive at their own position and then they return.<sup>98</sup>

All this of course furnishes an excellent counterpart to what the Apocalypse tells about the part played by the guardians in the final accounting before the throne of God. We therefore do not hesitate to feel that the guardian spirits of the Apocalypse are primarily Iranian figures. Yet at the same time it will have to be admitted that they are not entirely or only of the Fravashi type. The latter are essentially heroic figures, dauntless and autocratic, as the Fravardin Yasht clearly indicates. What the Apocalypse has to say about the guardians being afflicted by the sins of the men in whom they dwell and about their bearing man's deeds heavenward runs contrary to the inherent character of the Fravashis. Here Jewish-Christian concepts derived from the traditional angelology have added color to the picture.

#### IV

The conclusions which have thus been reached concerning the associations and the origins of the more important ideas embodied in the narrative of the soul's fate after death will, if they be correct, permit certain important conclusions respecting the provenience, date, and significance of the Apocalypse of Paul.

A word might well be said at the outset about the various versions in their relation to the original text. The first fact to be kept in mind in this connection is that no small significance attaches to the Syriac version, supported by the Armenian, as a source both for the general sequence of thought and for the

<sup>98</sup> XXXVII, 6-8, Sacred Books of the East, vol. XXIV, Pahlavi Texts, vol. III, 1885, p. 299.

wording of individual passages. The section with which we have been dealing affords an excellent test of the Syriac as representative of the original sequence of thought. In it two distinct threads of narrative, the one dealing with the fate of the righteous, the other with the fate of the wicked, run side by side. The Syriac is, as we have seen, frequently the version which preserves the *parallelismus membrorum* most adequately. By contrast, the Greek in its present form is entirely untrustworthy for the knowledge of the structure and the sequence of thought embodied in the book. It more often paraphrases the original than renders it, and it abbreviates severely at all times. Yet that Greek was probably the original language of the Apocalypse is indicated by three items that have come to our attention: (1) the request made by Paul that the angelus interpreter render intelligible to him the word *Hallelujah* sung in heaven; (2) the Syriac rendering of ἀχερουσία λιμνη by *yamā d' eukaristā*; and (3) the Latin reading 'stella' in the passage quoted above,<sup>99</sup> arising from a confusion of the Greek ἀστραπή with ἀστήρ. Hence the existing Greek text, where it chooses to render rather than to paraphrase the original, can be of significance for the wording of the primitive text. Yet in actual practice it is probably less useful than either the Syriac or the Latin. When the last two coincide, they give a high degree of probability, even when they contradict the Greek, as regards the wording of the original text. Where they fail to coincide, the Syriac seems to be the better source, first, because it is slavish in its renderings, secondly, because it does not seem to have been exposed to corruption to the same extent as the Latin. On the other hand, as in the case of the 'western non-interpolations' of the New Testament text, the non-existence in the Latin of a passage found in the Syriac is fair proof of an addition to the Syriac text.

With the fact of a Greek original we must correlate the fact that the associations, at least of the section under discussion, are essentially oriental. In searching for parallels to the ideas developed in our section of the Apocalypse we have never

<sup>99</sup> Cf. above, p. 212.

found ourselves able to move far from Mesopotamia, where Manicheism was and where the Mandaeans became indigenous, and where in the early Christian centuries the currents of influence flowing from Persia were pronounced indeed. These two facts, when taken together, are of prime importance for the provenience of the document, though they are by no means the only ones to be considered in that connection. To suppose that the Apocalypse was written in Mesopotamia itself is hardly possible. One would not expect to find Greek written in this corner of the world save by savants like Bardesanes or by professional scribes in the employ of governmental officials like the individual who composed the text of the parchment No. X, found at Dura,<sup>100</sup> and clearly the author of the Apocalypse belongs to neither of these classes. We shall therefore have to assume that the original home of our document is farther west than Mesopotamia, while sufficiently near to the land of the two rivers to permit contact with the conceptions radiating from it in religious matters.

The Syrian littoral and Antioch, a city of bilingual culture, naturally suggest themselves at once as satisfying the requirements that have been laid down. Yet one important difficulty stands in the way of a Syrian origin for our Apocalypse. This is the pseudonym under which it was written.

In examining the theme to which the title of his book gives expression, namely, "Die Stellung des Apostels Paulus neben den Zwölf in den ersten zwei Jahrhunderten," Wagenmann has established the fact that from the close of the first century the tendency existed in Christianity as a whole to subordinate the authority of Paul under that of the Twelve.<sup>101</sup> The fact itself will have to be admitted. In one particular sphere of the ancient Christian world, however, there existed an anomalous situation the characteristics of which are that, while the authority of Paul was generally subordinated to that of the Twelve, the tendency existed none the less to cultivate a special interest in the person of Paul, and to use his name in connec-

<sup>100</sup> The Excavations at Dura-Europos, ed. Baur and Rostovtzeff, New Haven, 1931, pp. 201-216.

<sup>101</sup> Zeitschrift für die neutestamentliche Wissenschaft, Beiheft 3, Giessen, 1926.



tion with a series of pseudonymous writings. The particular sphere of ancient Christianity to which we allude is that of Asia Minor, and the pseudonymous writings the Epistle to the Ephesians, that to the Laodiceans, the Acts of Paul, the Martyrdom of Paul, and the Ascension of Paul referred to by Epiphanius.<sup>102</sup> The significance of this phenomenon has in our opinion been underestimated by Wagenmann, with the result that the place of the Asiatic Marcion in the development of Christian opinion regarding the apostolic authorities and the genesis of his views receive no satisfactory explanation.

Two facts have to be kept in mind if the Asiatic interest in the person of Paul and Marcion's espousal of his witness are to be explained. The first is the existence of strong anti-judaic tendencies in Asia Minor, to which even the letter to the Galatians may be a witness.<sup>103</sup> The second is the fact that the contact of the Asiatic people with Paul dates back to the days before the Jerusalem Council, that is, to the period in which the Twelve were not yet functioning as missionary agents. We are therefore inclined to conclude that a positive interest in Paul as the ultimate Christian authority existed in certain sections of Asia down into the second century of Christianity, that it is responsible in part for the Marcionite movement as well as for the production of the later pseudepigrapha bearing Paul's name.

From this it would appear to follow that the origin of the Apocalypse of Paul should normally be sought in Asia Minor. Indeed the manuscripts of the Apocalypse contain an aetiological legend which connects it with Tarsus in Cilicia. The legend, as given in the Latin version, reads as follows:

In the consulate of Theodosius Augustus the younger and Cynegius, a certain honorable man then dwelling at Tarsus in the house which had been the house of Saint Paul, an angel appeared unto him by night and gave him a revelation, saying that he should break up the foundation of

<sup>102</sup> Panarion, Haer. 38, 2. It is mentioned as being the property of the Cainites, who, while an Ophite sect, seem also to have been of Asiatic provenience.

<sup>103</sup> J. H. Ropes, *The Singular Problem of the Epistle to the Galatians*, Harvard Theological Studies XIV, 1929.

the house and publish that which he found; but he thought this to be a lying vision. But a third time the angel came, and scourged him and compelled him to break up the foundation. And he dug, and found a box of marble inscribed upon the sides: therein was the revelation of Saint Paul and his shoes wherein he walked when he taught the word of God. But he feared to open that box and brought it to the judge; and the judge took it, sealed as it was with lead, and sent it to the emperor Theodosius, fearing that it might be somewhat strange; and the emperor, when he received it, opened it and found the revelation of Saint Paul.

The narrative embodied in the Apocalypse is of course a legend. Yet it may be a testimony to the fact that in Asia Minor our document was first brought to the attention of the Christian communities.

The question arises in this connection, whether we can suppose that the Iranian influences so clearly manifested in the narrative in the Apocalypse of the fate of the soul after the death of the body could actually have been exercised in Asiatic territory? The bulk of the material which Reitzenstein discussed in "*Das Iranische Erlösungsmysterium*" comes from Syria, Palestine, and Egypt. Only latterly, in his "*Vorgeschichte der christlichen Taufe*," 1929, have the Asiatic echoes of Iranian concepts found a systematic treatment at his hands. From what is even now evident, however, it will hardly be possible to argue against the Asiatic provenience of the Apocalypse on the basis of its Iranian associations, for not only was the ground thoroughly prepared there in Achaemenian days by the introduction of significant cults, but it was doubtless carefully sown in the days of Parthian domination and produced a definite harvest when Manicheism found so ready a reception in the minds of the Asiatics. Our Apocalypse may thus be an important link in the chain of evidence for the spread of Persian ideas into Asia Minor.

The aetiological legend quoted above has been taken to indicate that our document is a product of the latter half of the

fourth Christian century.<sup>104</sup> That is of course an inference quite distant from the mind of the writer of the legend just quoted, and one the value of which must be tested on the basis of evidence other than that of the legend itself. What can legitimately be inferred from our document is that it was brought to the attention of the Christians of Asia Minor generally in the latter half of the fourth century, a date which may or may not coincide with that of its original composition. Only an examination of the origins and associations of all the concepts with which the apocalyptic writer operates, the solution of the problem of immediate sources and of the relation of the Apocalypse to the so-called Ascension of Paul, of which Epiphanius speaks,<sup>105</sup> can determine the actual date of composition with any degree of accuracy. Certainly the fundamental ideas with which our author works in the section that has come under our observation were current in Mesopotamia in the middle of the third century. Even though Augustine<sup>106</sup> and Sozomen<sup>107</sup> are our earliest outside witnesses to the existence of the document, it will be well to keep the latter half of the third century open as a *terminus a quo* for its composition.

In two respects the section of the Apocalypse with which we have been dealing has special importance. In the first place, it furnishes an interesting testimony to the way in which elements of the subject-matter related to the so-called 'iranische Erlösungsmysterium' went over into Christian thought. The 'Erlösungsmysterium,' as outlined by Reitzenstein, represents an experience of salvation conveyed through the belief in the human soul as an element of the divine primal man, an element imprisoned in a hostile universe as the result of his defeat in primordial conflict, and redeemed by him in his soteriological self-manifestation. The roots of this belief Reitzenstein finds in the figure of the Iranian primal man, in the concept of the *Daena*, the conscience or, as he interprets, the 'self' of man, and in the belief in the divine origin of the soul. By a

<sup>104</sup> Stählin, *Die altchr. griech. Litteratur*, 1924, p. 1214.

<sup>105</sup> Cf. above, p. 240.

<sup>106</sup> *Tractatus* 98 in *Johannem*.

<sup>107</sup> *Historia* vii. 19.



coalescence of these three elements there is achieved a theology in which a redeemed redeemer actually redeems a portion of his own self. The particular significance of this theology, which must actually have been current in Mesopotamian Manicheism, is that it existed, according to Reitzenstein, in remotely pre-manichæan centuries, forming the tap-root of all oriental soteriology and finding a reflection in the vision of the seventh chapter of Daniel, in Jesus' use of the name Son of Man, and in the fundamentals of Pauline christology. Tenuous as is the line of argument by which the beginnings of Christian soteriology and this ultimately Iranian Anthropos-theology are connected, it is often difficult to find an objective basis upon which to discuss the issue involved. In our Apocalypse, where the influence exercised by the very range of concepts with which Reitzenstein operates is admittedly present, we have such a basis. What we find is that the very Daena which comes to the Apocalypse by way of syncretism has either not been swallowed up in or has again lost her relation to the Anthropos, and is very evidently being affected by the angelology traditionally current in Christian circles. It would thus appear that the passage of a concept from one environment to another is attended by a process of adaptation to and absorption into the new environment so momentous that at least its position in the larger scheme of things in which it originally stood tends to become obscure. If this be true, it follows that while we may have manifold refractions of the Anthropos, the Daena, and the divine Psyche as concepts of oriental religious belief, their union into a system will scarcely be more than the passing phenomenon of one particular time and place, and hence not the key to the development of the whole of later oriental religious thought.

The second of the two particulars in which the section of the Apocalypse treated in this discussion is significant, is to be found in the testimony afforded by it to the later development of Christian eschatological thought. The Jewish and early Christian apocalypses are concerned primarily with the great cataclysm in which the world and its kingdoms are to be engulfed, with the victory of the righteous remnant over the



powers of wickedness, and with the great assize. A strong pessimistic and anti-cultural strain runs through them all. *Pereat mundus* is the burning hope and expectation of writers and readers. By contrast, syncretistic eschatology concerns itself primarily with the fate of the individual, showing to men the way to the stars and escaping entirely the accusation, *toto orbi et ipsi mundo cum sideribus suis minantur incendium, ruinam moliuntur*, while at the same time avoiding the disappointments that arose when prophecy failed of fulfilment. In the Apocalypse of Paul all the dangerous elements of earlier Christian eschatology have fallen away. All that remains is a steadfast hope that the individual will be recompensed in accordance with his deserts, and this is stated in terms of the syncretistic eschatology. Thus even in the eschatological sphere of thought Christianity and oriental religious belief have become reconciled.